REMARKS

ON

BOWER'S

LIVES of the POPES,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

By the late Reverend ALBAN BUTLER,

Author of the Lives of the Fathers, Martyrs, and principal Saints of the Church.

Charity rejoiceth with Truth. 1 Cor. xii. 6.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Refutation of Mr. Bower's calumnies doth not conſtitute the principal merit of this excellent book. The pious and learned author makes the very miſrepreſentations of that writer, ſubſervient to his grand object; that of confirming the faithful, and of winning over adverſaries, by expoſing Catholic truth, with the meekneſs and temper of its firſt preachers.—Through the means furniſhed by Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, he traces every error, as well as every truth, to its fountain head; and advances nothing relatively to either, that he does not ſupport by the inflexible evidence of facts. As piety and ability are equally united with truth, in conducting the whole of this work, every adverſary, as well as every votary, of the Catholic religion, muſt be intereſted in its peruſal.

LETTER I.

On the pretended account of Mr. Bower's eſcape from the Inquiſition of Macerata.

YOU deſire my thoughts on the new Hiſtory of the Popes. Your requeſts are commands, and preclude the moſt juſt excuſes of want of leiſure, abilities and neceſſary books for ſuch a taſk. Your goodneſs will take in good part the hurry in which I have thrown together ſome few reflections, without a ſufficient ſtock of books, eſpecially of the proper original hiſtorians. I have procured a ſight of the two firſt volumes, and have gone through the tedious drudgery of giving them a ſuperficial peruſal. The title page afforded me no ſmall matter of diverſion, and had I leiſure and the humour, I ſhould be inclined to break ſome jokes upon it. But I ſhall refrain, leſt I ſhould ſeem to make the misfortunes of another a ſubject of mirth. They really fill my heart with the deepeſt ſentiments of tender compaſſion. I ſhall ſpeak of the author in the moſt ſincere charity, though he fouls his paper with the worſt of language againſt thoſe who certainly deſerve reſpect, and throws dirt upon the greateſt, the moſt learned, and the moſt holy men of primitive antiquity, to whom, after the apoſtles, we ſtand indepted for our chriſtianity. He even goes out of his way to indulge this vein againſt thoſe who no ways fall within the plan of his work. It will indeed be neceſſary to point out his falſifications and ſlanders; but in things publicly notorious, and to prevent the pernicious effects of impoſture and calumny. 'We are ſo far from acting againſt the precept of my text,' ſays the late ingenious and reverend Mr. Seed, in his ſermon on James iv. 11, 'that it is an act of charity as well as juſtice, to ſtrip the wolf of the ſheep's cloathing, which he has put on to make a prey of the innocent and unſuſpecting. It is a matter of great conſequence to the public.' No one can condemn him who diſcovers an impoſture which is made uſe of to deceive men, and to enſnare the unwary: it is a duty to point at the devil's cloven

ſoot, when he transforms himſelf into an angel of light. Proteſtants of honour and integrity applaud the deſign, and even rejoice at it. The love of truth is alone a ſufficient motive, nor can notorious forgery ſerve any cauſe. When we aſcribe to the Romiſh church what is falſe, we expoſe ourſelves, to the juſt contempt of the Romaniſts themſelves, and inſtead of diſcrediting their religion, give them a bad ſpecimen of our own,' ſays the author of Remarks in defence of Dr. Middleton, p. 128.

The name of the author appears in the frontiſpiece of the work, with the pompous titles of 'Eſquire; heretofore public profeſſor of rhetoric, hiſtory and philoſophy in the univerſities of Rome, Fermo and Macerata; and in the latter place, counſellor of the Inquiſition.' We cannot wonder that the character of ſuch an hiſtorian ſhould fill his purſe, draw in a long liſt of ſubſcribers and patrons, and make all who were impoſed upon by the cheat, big with expectations of ſomething extraordinary from ſuch a pen. It is to be preſumed that this intention is already anſwered, at leaſt as to his main purpoſe of ſubſcriptions; and the diſguiſed Jeſuit may be now ſafely unmaſked. I am ſurprized to find the only title omitted which he could with truth, and ought in juſtice to have mentioned, that of a Jeſuit, and of a 'profeſſed Jeſuit:' for he had made his laſt ſolemn vows. He certainly could not mean that by the word eſquire. Why then did he ſuppreſs his former profeſſions of Jeſuit and Prieſt? He was both, and he can no more efface either his vows or his orders than he can his baptiſm, though he were to endeavour it in as ſolemn a manner as Julian the apoſtate did the latter. I know not whether the church of England which glories in ſupporting the hierarchy (which no other reformed church was ever able to do) would approve ſuch a conduct, that a prieſt ſhould totally ſhake off his orders, and metamorphoſe himſelf into a lay eſquire ſo as to neither retain the name, nor any marks or obligations of his former ſtate. May we not aſcribe the ſuppreſſion of this circumſtance in our North-Briton to an apprehenſion that it might give ſome ſcandal or offence? A zealous and worthy prelate of the church of England declaimed laſt year, very ſeverely againſt the like irregularity and indecency in a certain baronet, who had taken orders in his youth.

As to his religious vows, Mr. Bower has indeed the example of Luther and ſeveral other patriarchs of the reformation who ſhook off the like engagements. But our gentleman

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man ſeems conſcious to himſelf of ſome ſcandal in ſuch a conduct, and muſt be ſenſible that St. Paul ſays of thoſe who break the vow of chaſtity, 'having damnation, becauſe they have made void their firſt faith or vow,' 1 Tim. v. 12. that Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Methodius, St. Athanaſius, St. Ambroſe, St. Auguſtine, St. Chryſoſtom, and unanimouſly all the moſt venerable fathers of antiquity have, and many of them in whole books, condemned ſuch ſacrileges as enormous crimes? and that from the firſt ages, many conſecrated themſelves to God by vows of chaſtity, and ſeveral choſe rather to ſuffer the moſt cruel torments and death than to be unfaithful to their ſacred promiſes: this not in one country only, but in all parts of the world, in the Eaſt, and in the Weſt; among Greeks, Romans, and barbarous nations; under the perſecutions of the Romans, Scythians, Goths and Perſians; of which St. Ambroſe [1. 1 de Virgin. c. 4.] and other fathers and church-hiſtorians, and the genuine acts of martyrs, extant in the collections of Ruinart and Aſſemani, furniſh many illuſtrious examples: which I cannot preſume him entirely unacquainted with. I ſcarce think he will ſay that ſuch vows are impoſſible to be kept, which would be a flat contradiction to all authority, reaſon and experience. Many even in the world live perfectly chaſte beyond the age when the heat of the paſſions is moſt violent, before they marry. Many are obliged to continency in various unforſeen circumſtances in a married ſtate, and ſometimes marriage is for many years or for the whole life of perſons in ſome meaſure impoſſible. Will any one ſay that ſuch perſons cannot live chaſte? How much more eaſy is it, by the Divine aſſiſtance, to thoſe who ſeek it by the proper means, in a ſtate more removed from occaſions and dangers of temptations, and furniſhed with the moſt powerful helps? However, Mr. Bower, after the heat of his youth, advancing apace towards the decline of life, thought proper to forget his vows of perpetual chaſtity, which he had thrice publicly repeated, firſt when he entered the ſociety; 2dly, when he received holy orders in the Roman Catholic church; and 3dly, by his laſt ſolemn vows, according to the cuſtom of the Jeſuits. I caſually met with a paſſage in his life of pope Gregory the great [T. 2. p. 122.] in which he only blames thoſe vows when made by perſons too young to diſpoſe of themſelves for life. Raſh vows, eſpecially in youth, are to be carefully avoided. The church, to pre-

vent ſuch abuſes, orders virgins, in their noviceſhip, to be rigorouſly examined by the great vicar or deputy of the dioceſan, concerning their vocation. And ſhe is ready to make ſtronger reſtrictions, both as to age and other circumſtances, when it may ſeem neceſſary or expedient. She requires every where at leaſt ſixteen years of age, and leaves it to the prudence of parents and biſhops or their deputies to wait a ſtill much riper age, and other circumſtances; which is uſually done. After all, perſons are allowed at that age to be capable of diſpoſing of themſelves in marriage, a ſtate more difficult, and in which the happineſs of the party depends upon the humour, qualities and conduct of another no leſs than upon himſelf. Whereas in a ſtate of celibacy every one may ſecure to himſelf his own happineſs if he pleaſes. In general indeed, where extraordinary diſpoſitions and circumſtances do not give an aſſurance of that fervor which will obtain and ſupport this gift, a riper age ought to be expected before ſuch vows be allowed, which the prudence not only of the parents and tutors, but alſo of the paſtors of the church, is bound to obſerve. 'Theſe conſiderations, ſays our author, T. 2. p 122. ſtrongly inclined a conſcientious pope in our days (1) to declare void and null all vows of perpetual chaſtity that ſhould be made for the future, by virgins under the age of 25, that age having been fixed by the African canons. The good pope ſuppoſed no virgin to be a ſtranger, at that age, to this kind of war; but all to be as well acquainted, as ever they could be, both with the enemy's ſtrength, and their own. Thoſe alone therefore he thought properly qualified to engage in ſuch a war, ſince they alone could know, by experience, whether or no they could withſtand the enemy to the laſt, and faithfully perform what they ſo ſolemnly promiſed, in ranging themſelves under the banner of chaſtity. Mr. Bower muſt have attained the age of 25 years at leaſt when he was ordained prieſt, and more than that when he made his ſolemn vows according to the cuſtom of the Jeſuits. He muſt therefore have been then as well acquainted as ever he could be, with his own ſtrength. How came he afterwards to break through what he had 'ſo ſolemnly promiſed to God? Nay, what he had, I hope, faithfully kept to an age in which that enemy, when conquered, uſually loſes his ſtrength? Could he then find the victory impoſſi-

(1) *Benedict* XIII.

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ble which he had maintained during all the heat of the day? Whatever motive he alleges, does he not ſeem to have concealed the circumſtance of his vows, and his quality of prieſt and Jeſuit out of ſhame, and for fear men would cenſure ſuch a violation of his moſt ſolemn engagements, and ſhould ſuſpect the love of liberty to have been the chief motive of his change?

This has uſually been an unlucky circumſtance in ſuch proſelytes. The rule given by our Saviour, 'from their fruits ſhall ye know them,' is an obvious and ſenſible teſt. If a convert be ſincere, this will appear in the change of his life: and a true convert in religion will uſually be alſo a convert in his manners; for the ſame principle in the heart ought to produce both effects. Luther himſelf complained loudly of the contrary in his firſt proſelytes. Eraſmus [I. Ep. 41.] Briſtow [Motive 47.] and many other writers of that age make the ſame obſervation in the ſtrongeſt terms. It is eſpecially remarked of thoſe who have apoſtatized from religious vows, that their conduct has ſeldom left room to doubt what was the motive of their change. Candid proteſtants who have ſeen a little of the world, frequently make this remark. Eraſmus mentioning, in a letter, the marriage of Oecolampadius to a beautiful girl, when from a Brigitan friar he was become a Zuinglian preacher, ſays [l. 19. ep. 41. 3.] 'Œcolampadius has lately married a handſome wench. I ſuppoſe he deſires to mortify the fleſh. Some call it the Lutheran tragedy: it ſeems to me a comedy; for the ſtorms and tumults always break in matrimony.' Hence king Charles II. hearing one ſay that they had a new brother, meaning, that a religious man was come over to the church of England, replied: 'then we ſhall ſoon have a ſiſter.' The learned proteſtant hiſtorian and critic John Clerk, in his Bibliotheque Univerſelle, for the year 1686, [T. 2. art. 13. p. 184.] confirms this remark by the example of a certain Florentine who came to Geneva in 1663, to live, as he ſaid, 'da galanti huomo,' and to cudgel or ſtab men for half the price he had done at Venice: but was ſo terrified by the magiſtrates that he left the town on the ſpot: and by that of a Spaniſh monk who came, as he declared, that he might partake of the ſeventh ſacrament which he complained his church debarred him from. 'Certe ego volo,' ſaid he, 'participare de iſto ſacramento pro ſatisfactione animæ meæ; et ideo veni in hanc civitatem ubi audivi quod

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omnes maritantur.' Likewiſe that of Miroglio, a canon of Caſal, who came becauſe he had ſworn in a paſſion that he would turn heretic. John Clerk adds: 'If all the proteſtants who have been converted, as they ſay, for ſome years, were as open as the Spaniſh monk, and the canon of Caſal, there is great appearance, that they would ſcarce bring better reaſons for their pretended converſion.' He aſſigns indeed for the cauſe of this, the opinion which foreign countries entertain of the licentious liberty of living almoſt as men pleaſe in the reformed churches, and without any yoke or curb of religion; but the truth of his remark he founds in matter of fact, and makes it a caution to his brethren not to be over-fond of ſuch proſelytes. 'Si tous les proteſtans qui ſe ſont convertis, comme on parle, depuis peu d'années, etoient auſſi ingenues que le moine Eſpagnol et que le chanoine de Caſal, il y a bien de l'apparence qu' ils n'apporteroient de guere meilleurs motifs de leur converſion pretendue.' The ſame experience made a learned and ingenious gentleman, keeper of a public library, declare upon the firſt publication of advertiſements and propoſals for the printing of this work, that he feared the author, though he had heard nothing in particular concerning him, would appear in the end to the diſcredit and confuſion of thoſe who ſhould patronize him; which he therefore adviſed others to take care of, or they would certainly be duped. When a lady of quality wrote to him, begging his ſubſcriptions to the Lives of the Popes, he anſwered her ladyſhip by letter that he would never ſubſcribe either for himſelf or his library, having no opinion of ſuch proſelytes: as I have heard from his mouth more than once.

Mr. Bower to indemnify himſelf for the omiſſion of the titles of Prieſt and Jeſuit, uſhers in his name, adorned with thoſe of 'public-profeſſor of eloquence, hiſtory and philoſophy, in the univerſities of Rome, Fermo, and Macerata.' Every one knows that teaching ſchool is the firſt employment of young Jeſuits, often before they are prieſts, or qualified for other offices. To tell us that he taught ſchool is little more than what we muſt have underſtood, had he only called himſelf a Jeſuit. I am informed that he certainly was never a profeſſor, but only a ſtudent, in Rome, though that city is not famed as an univerſity, except for the civil and canon laws: ſo that what he here means I cannot gueſs. He taught indeed the ſchools of humanity, and I believe of morals and philoſophy at Macerata,

cerata, which gay country town enjoys the privileges of an univerſity, as many ſingle colleges do in Italy. Bologna is the noted univerſity in that part: the college of Macerata is barely a ſchool for the neighbourhood, not a place of reputation or reſort for learning. The gentleman ſeems at ſome loſs for titles when he ſtrains and boaſts ſo pompouſly, that he has been a ſchool-maſter in a ſociety inſtituted for that end, and which moſt uſually aſſigns that employment to its young members. But how can we think him at a loſs whilſt we read him qualified 'counſellor of the Inquiſition?' By this word I ſhould naturally underſtand a judge in that tribunal: For the word counſellor in a court abroad, ſignifies a judge, and it is explained of our author in that ſenſe in the relation publiſhed by Dr. Hill. But I ſhould be glad, for his ſake, to preſume that by this title he means to ſtyle himſelf only conſultor, to bring to the Inquiſition prohibited books, eſpecially Engliſh, or to be conſulted by the inquiſitors in certain caſes; which is a thing poſſible and very probable: for in country towns a curate or ſchool-maſter may bear ſuch a title. In France bookſellers who beſt know the laws and privileges of the ſtationers, are often deputed by the parliaments to examine books which are imported. But as for a Jeſuit inquiſitor in Italy, every one who has travelled abroad, and informed himſelf of that court, knows it is what ſome philoſophers call an Hirco-cervus, or a monſter in nature, it being a thing never known, and repugnant to the laws and cuſtoms of that country, whatever might be poſſible elſewhere.

Many in England have been often entertained with a wonderful hiſtory of his change of religion, and eſcape from the Inquiſition of Macerata. Dr. Hill, a gentleman of great candour and worth, was much taken with ſo pathetic a ſtory, and innocently drew it up as he had heard it, and committed it to the preſs. In this account Mr. Bower is pretended to ſay, 'that upon an information that a perſon 'had ſpoke diſreſpectfully of the inquiſition, whilſt the 'guilty perſon ſuffered at Rome, an innocent gentleman 'of Florence, was, by a villainous treachery, decoyed 'thence to Macerata, where, Mr. Bower himſelf ſitting in 'in the conncil of the Inquiſition, he was tortured with a 'cruelty beyond that of a Nero, and at laſt diſmiſſed upon 'advice that the true criminal was taken at Rome: But the 'unhappy gentleman continued ever after ſenſeleſs and diſ-'tracted. He gives another relation ſtill more frightful. A

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'certain gentleman, his particular friend, happened to let 'fall an innocent joke, about the garb of two Capuchin 'friars, and being overheard by them, was accuſed to the 'Inquiſition. Mr. Bower was ordered to take a guard, 'which is always in waiting, and to apprehend his unfor-'tunate friend, whilſt he was in bed with his wife lately 'married, at midnight, and the leaſt excuſe would have 'been fatal to himſelf. The nobleman expired under his 'inhuman tortures, in preſence of the inquiſitors. Mr. 'Bower ſtruck with horror, (as well he might if any part 'of this had been true) reſolved to make his eſcape, and 'to renounce a religion which ſanctified ſuch villanies. He 'procured from the inquiſitor general leave to make a pil-'grimage to Loretto, but ſhaped his courſe over the moun-'tains towadrs Switzerland, armed with a pocket-piſtol 'in the reſolution to diſpatch himſelf for fear of torments, 'in caſe he could no ways eſcape. Both he and his horſe 'were growing faint when he arrived among the Switzers: 'but whilſt he was refreſhing himſelf in a Catholic canton, 'he ſaw himſelf deſcribed, with a great reward for appre-'hending him, in a paper which two men were reading. 'He diſguiſed himſelf, and got away immediately or he 'would have been ſeized. From Bern he fell down the 'Rhine to Straſburg, to avoid paſſing through popiſh coun-'tries: and from Straſburg he came on poſt-horſes to Calais. 'No ſooner was he alighted at his inn there but advertiſe-'ments were fixed upon the gate, deſcribing him, and 'promiſing a reward for apprehending him. He endeavour-'ed to croſs the ſea in a fiſhing-boat, but was forced back 'to Calais, the weather being too boiſterous. Luckily 'lord Baltimore took him into his yatch. The day after 'he landed at Dover he was ſurprized to receive a letter di-'rected to him from the inquiſitor general, with promiſes of 'honour and rewards if he would return. But the perſon 'diſappeared before he could inquire after him.'

This abſurd romance was believed, and drawn up 'bonâ fide' by Dr. Hill, chaplain to the archbiſhop of Canterbury, and printed for R. Griffiths then in St. Paul's Church-yard, in 1750. Nov. 1. being called the ſubſtance of a relati-on which Mr. Bower gave of his eſcape to the ſaid doctor. Mr. Bower immediately diſowned the account by an ad-vertiſement in the London Evening Poſt. This ought to have utterly deſtroyed the fable, which was entirely built

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on his authority. Dr. Hill, perhaps being afraid to paſs himſelf for a liar, advertiſed in the ſame public paper, the week following, a pamphlet to ſhew the reaſons why he believed the ſtory true. However, his bookſeller when this pamphlet was aſked for, anſwered that it never would appear. Nevertheleſs, Dr. Hill had too much honour and probity not to drop the fable. But the bookſeller ſeems to have been unwilling to loſe his job, and a ſecond edition was made in 1751, with a new preface of Mr. Barron, and innumerable copies were diſperſed over the kingdom. It is urged that Mr. Bower had himſelf often told this ſtory, which is teſtified by Dr. Hill and Mr. Barron, and by many other gentlemen and booksellers, who aſſure that they heard it from his own mouth in their public ſhops, and in many honourable families, from London through Oxford to the borders of Staffordſhire, and in other places. I have been told the ſame by honourable gentlemen from Cumberland. To this I beg leave to anſwer, that Mr. Bower could never relate ſo ridiculous and inconſiſtent a tale, at leaſt ſeriouſly: for he muſt have been ſenſible that ſo glaring an impoſture would utterly ruin his own reputation, and the fortune of his other works in the world. Should it be proved true, (which yet I do not preſume to be done,) that he ſometimes took the liberty, traveller-like, of amuſing a company of friends with a romantic ſtory told in jeſt; has he not at leaſt ſatisfied his obligation to truth and juſtice by the moſt ſolemn and public proteſtation, by which he diſowned the relation? I read his advertiſement with ſingular pleaſure, becauſe by it he ſtands authentically cleared, as I preſume, from the foul charge of the moſt groſs and injurious forgery, and I was enabled to ſilence one who called it a ſpecimen of his talents, and his firſt eſſay in the art of romancing. This fable, notwithſtanding, which ought to have fallen of courſe, when denied and condemned by him to whom it is aſcribed, ſtill continues to be handed about in every part of this kingdom, and has been republiſhed in our monthly magazines. The love of truth obliges me therefore to take notice of this fatherleſs impoſture: at which no one can take offence, whilſt no one is meant or pointed at. A notorious forgery, without any known parent, diſclaimed by him whoſe name it falſely bears, is the only object of my animadverſions in this letter.

The devil, always the father of lyes, ſought by ſlander and miſrepreſentation to render chriſtianity odious in its birth.

birth. Its enemies always made uſe of theſe arms againſt it, by which they proved whoſe agents they were, and by what ſpirit they were moved. Chriſt both ſuffered himſelf, and left to his followers for their portion, calumnies no leſs than open perſecution: and he has pronounced it their happineſs, and the greateſt mark of their predeſtination, if they receive and bear them with patience, joy and holy perſeverance. In this they ſhew the miracle of his grace. The primitive chriſtians who lived as meek lambs among wolves, perfect patterns of patience, charity and all divine virtues, and entirely diſengaged from the earth, were traduced as impious, enemies to all religion, man-haters, murderers of infants, feeding on human fleſh, practiſing every ſort of uncleanneſs, &c. Even their ſacred myſteries were deemed Thyeſtæan banquets, as appears from Tertullian, Athenagoras, St. Juſtin, &c. The Jews and Gentiles laid theſe things to their charge, and ſo loudly that it was eſteemed criminal to offer a modeſt reply. The poor Catholics in England, how much ſoever they may degenerate from the primitive Chriſtians in other reſpects, certainly bear a near reſemblance to them in this, and have no other comfort than what the encouraging promiſes of Chriſt, and the example of his ſaints afford them. Many out of ignorance, ſome blinded by the prejudices of party zeal, and ſome through malice look upon it as meritorious to aſcribe to them principles pernicious to human ſociety, and to treat them as monſters, enemies to their own ſpecies: of which if the leaſt part were true, gibbets and flames would be too mild puniſhments for them. But ſhould they be innocent, as they moſt certainly are, not only they who forge ſuch ſlanders, but alſo many who too eaſily believe and propagate them, will be found guilty. The Candor and humanity, which ought to particularly diſtinguiſh all Engliſhmen as hereditary virtues, and which recommend to the whole world our gentry and nobility, thoſe eſpecially who occupy the higheſt places of honour, leave no doubt but injured truth, if it could find a proper channel to convey it, would diſſipate the thick miſts of Slander, and reach their ears and breaſts. Certainly it cannot ſeem unreaſonable that Catholics ſhould be allowed an impartial hearing, and that every obſcure impoſtor who ſtarts out of the ground, ſhould not have it in his power to bear them down by mere noiſe and aſſurance in calumnies, whilſt they are not ſuffered to ſpeak in their own juſtification. An impoſtor and calumniator

lumniator offers a grievous affront to all whom he attempts to deceive with falſities and lyes: and to detect them is not only a duty of juſtice to the oppreſſed, but alſo a public benefit to all whom it ſecures from injurious miſtakes and falſe prejudices. Truth is ever valuable, and juſtice is due to all. Wherefore I am not unwilling that you communicate theſe remarks where you think proper; though they are not in dreſs to appear in public. We have been deluded by many impoſtors: but certainly a more daring one than the unknown forger of this relation never ſhewed his head. He diſcovers himſelf ſo barefacedly, that it ſeems incredible that any one of a little experience ſhould be deceived by him, and he certainly offers a grievous affront to the underſtanding of this nation by advancing ſuch an inconſiſtent tale. But the giddy mob is eaſily taken with ſhew, and both the ſubject and the pompous titles which are here aſſumed, carry with them an impoſing air in this kingdom. Blood-thirſty papiſts, bloody inquiſition, are like a raw head and bloody-bones to affright poor people and children. They are too favourable a topic not to make any thing go down with the mob. Such accounts, however drawn up, are a better and more ſure job to a bookſeller, than the beſt trumped-up ſtory of an horrible murder, and will be greedily ſwallowed by thoſe that think no lye can appear in print. But, firſt, the common-place ſtories of the inquiſition and maſſacres are groſs miſrepreſentations of the truth. Secondly, ſcandals which may have happened, are no ways to be charged on religion, becauſe they were committed by men who were governed by the ſpirit of the world, and acted on principles of human policy, not on thoſe of the goſpel. Religion can no more be charged with them, than with the outrages of rebels, or the follies of fanatics; however it might be even made a pretext. But Dr. Middleton advances, that the fundamental principles of the Roman Catholic religion tend to eſtabliſh deſpotiſm in government. It ſeems very ſurpriſing that he could confidently affirm ſo flagrant a falſity, who had in his travels even in Italy itſelf ſeen more and older republics of that communion than are to be found of any other in the whole world, and thoſe of all others the moſt jealous of their liberties, in defence of which they have made the greateſt ſtruggles, and ſpent the moſt blood; the trophies and monuments whereof he met in almoſt every part of their ſtreets, in which he read at every ſtep the pompous inſcription,

LIBERTA. The Catholic faith teaches from the goſpel and St. Paul, and from the law of nature itſelf, that all are bound to obey kings and magiſtrates with reſpect, ſubmiſſion, and grateful affection, according to the eſtabliſhed conſtitution of each ſtate or country, which is uſually founded in the genius, maxims, and manners of each nation; and which when once ſettled, becomes the law of nature, and obedience to it the law of God. Treaſons and rebellions are condemned by it as crimes far more grievous than murders, as kings are ſacred, and public perſons, and as the public peace and preſervation is a good of a ſuperior order to the life and property of any private man: nor can any authority on earth ever diſpenſe in this duty. That the common inſtances produced againſt Catholics on this head are either falſe, or no ways to be aſcribed to their faith or principles, may be ſeen in ſhort in lord Caſtlemain's apology, and its defence, and in the book intitled Jeruſalem and Babel. But it ſuffices to repeat that all ſuch crimes, by whomſoever they might have been committed or approved, are clearly condemned by the Catholic faith, and by the unchangeable law of nature; and the guilty are juſtly puniſhed by the moſt ſevere laws. No tribunal of an inquiſition is any article of the Catholic faith or practice. It is an human law of polity or ſtate-government in certain countries, which other kingdoms are no leſs jealous to exclude. The author is very ſenſible that it is even odious to an exceſs in ſeveral catholic kingdoms, and that he may be a very good catholic, and entertain what ſentiments he pleaſes concerning it. The inquiſition eſtabliſhed in Italy or in Spain makes no terms of the catholic communion, any more than the executions of the Antitrinitarians who ſuffered at Geneva, or under Henry VIII. and queen Elizabeth in England, conſtitute a part of the proteſtant creed. For proteſtants have often had their bloody inquiſitions, and have ſpilt more cold blood, and much more in the field, on religious accounts, within theſe two hundred years, than the Roman inquiſition has done from its firſt inſtitution. Calvin himſelf acted the part of grand inquiſitor at Geneva. In 1553 he procured Servetus to be burnt alive, becauſe he denied the Trinity, as the letter of Calvin to Farel, Beza in his life of Calvin, and the letters of Servetus teſtify. Beza writes moreover, that Servetus was condemned by the ſentence of the Helvetic churches. It is well known with what rage

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king Henry VIII. perſecuted both the catholics and proteſtants who differed from him in opinions of religion, after he had ſeparated himſelf from the catholic communion, and the faith of the ſupremacy. Queen Elizabeth not only framed and rigorouſly executed ſo many ſanguinary and pecuniary penal laws againſt the catholics, whilſt they profeſſed themſelves ready to lay down their lives in defence of her perſon and crown againſt any foreign power, even the pope himſelf if he had invaded this country with arms; but ſhe likewiſe perſecuted many ways the Preſbyterians, and other diſſenters; and cauſed all thoſe to be burnt, who denied the divinity or conſubſtantiality of God the Son. To name thoſe who thus ſuffered in her reign in the city of Norwich alone from the hiſtory of that city: In 1579 Matthew Hamont, plowright, was condemned by the biſhop and conſiſtory, for denying the Godhead and power of Chriſt, delivered to the ſheriffs of Norwich, and burnt in the caſtle-ditch, May 20, after both his ears had been cut off for blaſphemy. In 1583 John Lewis was burnt for the like opinions, in the ſame city. Likewiſe one Cole, an Anabaptiſt and Arian, in 1587. And in 1588 Francis Ket, maſter of arts, having been firſt condemned by the biſhop. Many others ſuffered in other places for the ſame, ſome of whom are mentioned by Stow, &c.

The reign of queen Mary is always the burden of the ſong in this charge of blood and cruelty. It is much to be wiſhed that it had not been ſtained with ſuch a blemiſh. However, ſeveral circumſtances ſhew the cauſe to have not been purely religion, being complicated with crimes againſt the ſtate, eſpecially thoſe of illegal plunders and rebellions. For when king Henry VIII. and Edward VI. ſeized many of the church-lands into their own hands, both their commiſſioners and private perſons who embraced or favoured the new religion, plundered great part of the goods of the churches and monaſteries for their own uſe, without authority, robbing both the church and the crown. Mr. Weever, in his diſcourſe on 'funeral monuments' [Ch. 15. p. 124, 127.] gives us a long information which was preſented by a principal officer of the court to queen Elizabeth, demanding a ſtrict inquiry into, and puniſhment of, the numberleſs theſts, frauds, and plunders, committed by the commiſſioners, viſitors, and other goſpellers, even the learned men and excellent wits among them, againſt juſtice and conſcience, to the ſlander of the goſpel,

goſpel, the deſtruction of virtue, and the unmeaſurable robbing and diminiſhing of the treaſure of the crown. He ſetteth forth, that by theſe robberies and frauds, out of the plate and goods of abbeys and churches, which were worth a million of gold, (which would be above ten times as much now) ſmall portions came to the crown: That moſt part of the evidences or titles of the abbeys or lands were pilfered, loſt, or ſold: that the manors and lands were ſold by many ſubtle deceits, and the moneys never paid for them. Hence, notwithſtanding the immenſe ſpoils of the abbeys, king Henry VIII. was reduced to ſuch poverty, that (to the utter ruin of commerce in this nation) he corrupted the ſterling or Eaſterling coin, which king Richard I. had declared the only lawful money, and to ſtamp which he had invited over ſkilful Eaſterling or German coiners; whence came its name. So much was it debaſed, that the effigies of the beautiful king Henry appeared on the teſtons with a red copper noſe; and that coin contained only two-pence farthing in ſilver, and the other four-pence halfpenny in copper, as Camden mentions in his Remains, p. 208. And had the king lived a little longer, a project of leathern money was propoſed. Dr. Heylin and other hiſtorians of thoſe times complain of the ſame illegal thefts of particulars in the ſuppreſſion of monaſteries. What had been done by the legiſlative authority of king and parliament was never ſo much as called in queſtion. And cardinal Pool, by his legatine authority, confirmed, in the name of the church, the alienations of the church lands which had been made, diſpenſing the poſſeſſors for ever from all obligation of reſtitution; which indeed became very ſoon impoſſible, and muſt have unhinged the property of a whole nation, and broke the ſettlements of innumerable families. After the Daniſh devaſtations, the lands of many monaſteries were looked upon in a few years as legally alienated by preſcription, and never reſtored by the moſt holy kings of that age. Even when the ſame monaſteries were rebuilt, this was done by new foundations, and generally of quite other lands, as may be ſeen in thoſe of Rippon, Croyland, &c. Much more were the alienations of the church-lands made in the reign of king Henry VIII. within a few years regarded by all as firm; and the neceſſity being moſt evident and cogent, the church itſelf ratified and confirmed them. By which act all the authority, by which

which the property of men can be ſettled, concurred. Yet the commiſſioners, and much more other private perſons, who by plunder and theft ſeized, embezzled, or pillaged the deeds, titles, goods, or lands of the abbeys, &c. were accountable by law for their unjuſt robberies, both of the church and of the crown. Some of the miniſters of queen Mary had probably theſe exceſſes freſh in their memory, and perhaps imagined few of the goſpellers (as they called themſelves) innocent. Moreover, treaſons and rebellions were a more provoking circumſtance. Cranmer and Ridley had been ringleaders in the conſpiracy to exclude queen Mary from the crown, and to place it on the head of lady Jane. On which account, when Cranmer declared that he was ready to profeſs the catholic religion, he was anſwered, that this would not ſave his life. Queen Mary alſo remembered doubtleſs the treatment which ſhe and her mother had received from his hands. So that this ought not to be regarded as a caſe merely of religion. Moreover, the principal ringleaders of the new religion in England ſtirred up more rebellions, and carried on more conſpiracies againſt that queen during her ſhort reign, than were raiſed againſt queen Elizabeth during a reign nine times as long, as Dr. Bailey takes notice. Theſe circumſtances contributed to exaſperate ſome of the miniſters of that queen. After all, the executions in her reign on account of religion have been exaggerated beyond all bounds. Mr. Collier, a perſon very well verſed in the hiſtory of thoſe times, in his hiſtorical dictionary, under the name of Fox, thought it neceſſary to give this caution, that Fox, the famous martyrologiſt, was a careleſs writer, who gathered his accounts from people of weak minds, who could not be truſted: and that ſome whom he mentioned to have ſuffered death, were living when the firſt edition of his acts was publiſhed, and that they ſhewed themſelves to give him the lye; which obliged him to haſten a ſecond edition, in which he omitted their names. Mr. Collier adviſes perſons to read the hiſtory of Fox with the examen of his calendar by Parſons, conſulting the original authorities to find what may be depended upon. Many recorded here as martyrs died for treaſons, or in open rebellion, as is proved both by F. Parſons, and by Alanus Copus, that is, Nicholas Harpsfield, [Dial. 6. ch. 16, 17.] who ſhews Fox to have been a vender of fables. We muſt alſo remember that ſeveral of them ſuffered under Henry VIII,

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who was no catholic prince, as his great hero Bilney. Many members of the church of England at preſent would have added to the calendar of martyrs, the Arians who ſuffered under queen Elizabeth. After all, notwithſtanding the outcries againſt queen Mary on this ſcore, it is clear that more blood was ſpilt for religion by king Henry VIII. and queen Elizabeth than during her reign; who had the moſt outrageous rebellions and treaſons to reſent, at leaſt in moſt whom ſhe ſuffered to be put to death; for ſhe was much the moſt tender and merciful of the whole race of the Tudors: and Camden, biſhop Burnet, and other proteſtant writers, bear teſtimony to her extraordinary devotion and piety; her diſintereſtedneſs; her auſterities, alms, liberality to the church and to the nobility, and great compaſſion to all; which virtues were the effects of her ſincere religion. The blood which was ſpilt by her authority will always tarniſh her hiſtory; and traitors ought to have been impeached for their crimes againſt the ſtate, not for their religious principles. But a ſpirit of perſecution was epidemical at that time: it prevailed among proteſtants with the greateſt virulence and fury, and in many places, without, and even againſt, all lawful authority.

Yet this perſecuting ſpirit was found in only few of the miniſters of queen Mary, and thoſe chiefly who were the weakeſt catholics, and had conformed to the changes of king Henry. The goſpel maxim of meekneſs and mercy was ſo conſpicuous in many, eſpecially of the more virtuous, that ſeveral of the biſhops prevented any proſecutions of that nature in their dioceſes, and very few were encouraged in the greateſt part of the reſt. For inſtances it may ſuffice to mention the two holy archbiſhops of Canterbury and York. The former was the truly great cardinal Pool, whoſe high birth, ſingular learning, and extraordinary piety, will ever make his memory dear and venerable to the lateſt ages. He is allowed by all proteſtants to have been moſt averſe to all ſuch perſecutions. Mr. Dart, in the hiſtory and antiquities of Canterbury, writes of him, page 171, that 'he was a man of learning, and of great humanity, very modeſt and obliging.—He was moderate in reſpect to religious opinions.—He was a favourer of proteſtants, and checked the biſhop of London's fury.' The proteſtant author of the lives of the ſtateſmen under Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary and Elizabeth, ſays, that cardinal Pool never conſented to the

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putting of any one to death for religion; and that he uſed to ſay, 'I came to exhort, not to compel.' It is a notorious miſtake, that he ever favoured the opinions of Luther: His inviolable attachment to the catholic faith, and to the See of Rome, is manifeſt from his whole conduct; and from his writings, eſpecially his letters publiſhed by cardinal Querini; and from the regiſter of the acts of his legatine court in England, extant in five volumes manuſcript in folio. His mildneſs was purely the reſult of his prudence and virtue. Dr. Heath, archbiſhop of York, was no leſs an enemy to perſecution. After the demiſe of biſhop Gardiner, he was named by queen Mary high chancellor of England. At her death, he by his own authority aſſembled the parliament, and ordered the princeſs Elizabeth to be proclaimed queen. Being deprived by her of his archbiſhopric, becauſe he always remained a zealous ſtickler for the catholic faith and the ſupremacy of the pope, he retired to Cobham in Surrey, where he died in 1566. See Drake, in his hiſtory and antiquities of York, page 153.

It were to be wiſhed that others had followed theſe great examples, which ſuffice to ſhew that the beſt catholics could oppoſe all religious perſecution, when proteſtants carried it to the utmoſt extremities; who to be conſiſtent with their own fundamental principles, ought to practiſe as well as preach the maxims of toleration. Religion is often made uſe of as a pretext and a blind to the world, eſpecially by politicians, to cover their paſſions and criminal projects, in actions in which it has no ſhare, and which it abſolutely condemns, as in the Paris maſſacre, and in many other ſtate-affairs both at home and abroad. Religion cannot be accountable for the abuſe of its name. Waving odious retortions and endleſs recriminations, let all examine themſelves at home, before they throw ſtones at others; and let thoſe who cry out againſt Inquiſitions, firſt ſet a perfect example of moderation themſelves. In Holland, and in both catholic and proteſtant ſtates of Germany, we have examples of a happy freedom in this reſpect; and in mixed countries of different religions, good policy extremely recommends that ſuch maxims and ſuch a harmony ſhould be cultivated. My pen has inadvertently launched into a ſubject which does not belong to my preſent purpoſe. Wherefore to return to my province: as to the Inquiſition, every one ought to obſerve; that it

is no more a part of the Catholic than of the Proteſtant Creed; and that many Catholic countries are as zealous to exclude it, as any others can be. And ſuch are the ſentiments of the Engliſh Catholics whom I have ever heard mention that court. Mr. Bower might have lived a Catholic, without approving the Inquiſition of Italy or any other; as he can be the beſt Britiſh ſubject, without applauding the deſpotiſm of the French or Turkiſh government, or the perſecutions of Calvin, Henry VIII, &c. But without acting the unneceſſary part of an advocate of the Inquiſition, truth and juſtice oblige me to take notice that it is moſt groſsly calumniated and miſrepreſented. The Roman Inquiſition is certainly one of the mildeſt of courts; and there is no one that knows it, who would not (in moſt caſes) rather have his cauſe tried there, than in any ſpiritual court in England. No execution has happened in it for above a century: and no famous condemnation ſince that of Molinos, the author of the fanaticiſm and impiety of Quietiſm; which tended to the deſtruction of morals, and of ſociety, no leſs than of religion; whoſe life was nevertheleſs ſpared. In Spain and Portugal, that tribunal is indeed ſaid to be of a different nature. But the Inquiſition, which is eſtabliſhed in Spain is very much miſrepreſented, both among the Engliſh and the French; as the Sieur de Vairac, the impartial French author of 'The preſent ſtate of Spain in 1709,' complains [T. 2. p. 391.] though himſelf no friend to any courts of that ſort. For he informs us, that it conſiſts of the moſt reſpectable perſons in all Spain, both for virtue and learning, who always lean to mercy, and to favour the innocence of the party accuſed; and that a perſon is no ſooner impeached before them, than the whole accuſation is communicated to him, and he is allowed all poſſible means for his juſtification; and a learned council of lawyers is allotted to aſſiſt him in his defence, and to plead for him: an act of humanity which our laws long refuſed to perſons indicted of high treaſon, though the equity and mildneſs of our preſent government has ſupplied that ſevere circumſtance. The kings of Spain have indeed declared themſelves ſubject to their Inquiſition, but by their own voluntary act and deed, and of their own accord: the court was eſtabliſhed by them, and they name the counſellors and judges who preſide in it.

The ſtory of Mr. Bower's eſcape is the moſt ridiculous piece of forgery in every circumſtance, as I have often heard perſons of honour, and diſtinguiſhed members of our parliament,

liament, who had travelled abroad, openly call it. The pretended cruelties which the author deſcribes, are ſaid to have been exerciſed for the moſt trifling jeſts, ſuch as are not uncommon in thoſe countries, without any fear of cenſure, as my ears have been witneſſes. Certainly the author (whoever he be) was reſolved that no flouriſhes ſhould be wanting to his tale, that might render it more ſurprizing. But he ought to have firſt proved that the judges were not civilized creatures, or even men, that his ſtory might appear poſſible. Mr. Bower indeed made his eſcape from Perugia to Venice, and I do not doubt in great haſte. The occaſion is very well known in that country, eſpecially in the family of Buonacorſi. The reaſon of his hurry in Calais to croſs the channel (which was very different from the former) is likewiſe well known among his brother Jeſuits and countrymen at Douay. I am perſuaded he has never choſen to publiſh the one or the other. I only ſay, they have no ſort of affinity with what the pamphleteer puts in his mouth. Mr. Bower by diſowning it has ingenuouſly given him the lie, which teſtimony alone ought to have entirely diſcredited the pretended authority of him who diſclaims it. Indeed, who could imagine it poſſible that this gentleman would not have made at leaſt a more conſiſtent ſtory? Would he have altered and contradicted every real circumſtance of his eſcape and journey? Could he have ſaid that he obtained leave to make a pilgrimage to Loretto, from the Inquiſitor-general, who knew this was to transfer the ſcene into Spain or Portugal to find ſuch a title, which is not to be met with in Rome, much leſs in a Jeſuit's convent in Macerata or Perugia? He would not have forged an advertiſement of the Inquiſition publiſhed in any of the Switzer Cantons, eſpecially in the Proteſtant Gazette of Bern, if he meant the news-paper of thoſe parts. Much leſs could he have invented the ſtory, that he was no ſooner got into Calais, but his perſon was marked to the centry at the gate of the town to be ſeized; and this from the Inquiſition, which has no more power in France than it has in England. The like orders would have been given at the ſame time to the guards of the harbour, who are always extremely vigilant: conſequently he could never have got out of Calais. This whole piece is diverting to one who knows the exceſſive jealouſy of all French tribunals, againſt the leaſt act or name of a foreign Inquiſition. But the ſtory of the inviſible meſſenger,

meſſenger, with a letter from the Inquiſitor-general, meeting him in Dover, crowns the jeſt. He would certainly have kept ſo precious a monument, and ſo honourable a proof as that letter would have been. And I would fain know who ever heard of an Inquiſitor-general in Italy? for the pope cannot be meant by that name. The reputation of this monſtrous fiction has detained me too long, before I was aware. It is time to proceed to the doughty performance, of which you principally deſire my thoughts. The patrons of this work would have certainly better conſulted their own honour, and done more ſervice to the cauſe which they deſired to promote, if they had encouraged ſome learned man of their own clergy to undertake it, rather than an unknown ſtranger, whoſe true character will never enhance the credit of the hiſtory. I muſt defer entering upon the work itſelf till another opportunity. In the mean time, I am, &c.

P. S. It ſeemed ſuperfluous to take notice, that John Fox had no ſooner publiſhed his huge book, entitled, 'Acts and Monuments of the Church,' but the Catholics unanimouſly called it 'a Dunghill of Lies,' with Dr. Harding, in his refutation of the Apology, page 348. Nor had ingenuous Proteſtants a much better opinion of it. The learned Richard Rawlinſon, L. L. D. and F. R. S. in 'The new method of ſtudying Hiſtory, T. 2.' in the catalogue of Hiſtorians, p. 48. ſays of this work: 'The turn the author was biaſſed by, which is very evident in the whole work, has given good reaſon to ſuſpect his honeſty as well as his capacity. In troubleſome and noiſy times,—this author's reputation began to riſe ſo high as to procure his work a poſt in the parochial churches almoſt equal to that of the holy ſcriptures. But when ſome of his martyrs appeared alive to confront their regiſter, the book was ſuppreſſed, new modelled, and came out in a larger, though ſomewhat more modeſt dreſs, with a thinner red-lettered calendar. To complete the character of that author and his work, I refer you to the account which our moſt indefatigable Hiſtorian and Antiquary Mr. Hearne has given of both.

LETTER II.

On the Hiſtory of the Popes from St. Peter *to Pope* Victor.

I Need not put you in mind how high the expectations of the public were raiſed with regard to the Hiſtory of the Popes.

Popes. New diſcoveries, ſecret memoirs, and Vatican manuſcripts were talked of. But how has the world been diſappointed? as ſeveral ſubſcribers and learned members of the univerſities complain. They find nothing new, except falſifications which diſhonour a cauſe. The characters of all the moſt illuſtrious fathers of antiquity, whether popes or no, are repreſented in colours much to the diſadvantage of religion: ſome commendations are here and there beſtowed; but only to make the wounds ſtrike the deeper. A continual ſnarling would offend every reader. But the moſt holy and illuſtrious lights of faith are certainly ſunk in this performance, beneath the heathen worthies, or even the Mahometans. For this author would find more heroic virtues in a Saladin than he has done in the moſt juſtly renowned miracles of divine grace and faith, thoſe angelical men to whoſe example and ſpirit, after the apoſtles, the Chriſtian religion owes its ſplendor. I have heard this reflection (whether juſt or no) made in a learned company in one of our univerſities, that the vein of writing which appears in this author, ſeems to diſcover him no ſincere friend to Chriſtianity itſelf: for he plays faſt and looſe with every thing that falls in his way. The parade of quotations with which every page is adorned, is uſually borrowed: only the uſe made of them is very different, and they are generally very ill applied to his falſe gloſſes. The Memoirs of Tillemont, either at firſt or ſecond hand, have been of ſingular ſervice to him in embelliſhing his margin. His liſt of authors, or references to quotations, are often taken from him in the lump without the leaſt diſguiſe, where that laborious author is not named: even the abridged manner of citing the books of the ancients, eſpecially thoſe of St. Auguſtine, which is entirely peculiar to that writer, is adopted by our hiſtorian. He could not indeed have choſen a more faithful compiler, and the omiſſion of this acknowledgment is not a point to quarrel about, if the applications had been juſt. But the French Lives of the Popes printed in Holland, have ſupplied thoſe parts which ſeem to recommend his work as curious, as every one takes notice who has read that foreign hiſtory, compiled by the Marquis de G——, or as he is commonly called D' A——: a Gentleman better known in Europe for his crotchets, and the variety of his adventures, than in the republic of letters; who yet had ſometimes recourſe to good ſources, though often to bad ones, with groundleſs conjectures and falſe reflections.

Mr

Mr. Bower in his preface tells us, that he began a Hiſtory of the Popes in Rome, and had carried it down to the cloſe of the ſecond century: but that whilſt he wrote to maintain their ſupremacy, he diſcovered it to be a chimerical prerogative, unknown in the primitive ages. 'I became,' ſays he, 'a proſelyte to the opinion which I had propoſed to confute, and ſincerely abjured, in my mind, that which I had ignorantly undertaken to defend.' Had this been true, it muſt have happened whilſt he lived in Rome a ſtudent: and he muſt have been already a Proteſtant in his heart when he made his laſt vows among the Jeſuits, continued ſome years ſaying the Breviary and Maſs every day, honouring the Saints, profeſſing, teaching, and defending the Pope's ſupremacy, and the other tenets of the Catholic faith, nay, as he tells us in the title of this work, defending it by being himſelf a member in the bloody Inquiſition. We are told by the account of his eſcape aſcribed to him, that the cruelties of that court firſt opened his eyes, and made him reſolve to renounce a religion in which they were practiſed. I confeſs I cannot ſee what ſubtilty can reconcile theſe accounts together; much leſs make them conſiſtent with the true notorious circumſtances of his coming over. He aſcribes the zeal of the champions of the ſupremacy to the views of intereſt and preferments, or he thinks it could never find abettors. Theſe indeed will always have a ſway among men, as long as worldly paſſions reign in them. But will he ſo far baniſh virtue out of the world as to think none to be moved by its ſuperior influence? If Bellarmine and Baronius were honoured with the red hat, their lives and characters remove them from the ſuſpicion of ambition or avarice. At leaſt could men who died in defence of their faith in this article, as biſhop Fiſher, Sir Thomas More, and others did, have forfeited their honours and eſtates, and laid down their lives in the view of worldly preferments? Charity inclines men to judge well of others: but corrupt hearts think all men like themſelves, according to the remark of the wiſe-man, and of the heathen philoſopher Seneca. Suetonius mentions it as the higheſt pitch of malice in Nero that he thought all the reſt of the world as wicked as himſelf, only greater hypocrites. Men by being too cenſorious often betray what they feel in their own hearts, and publiſh their own infamy whilſt they meaſure the actions of others by their own paſſions. I do not judge this of our author, but wiſh the reflection may make him more ſparing in his cenſures.

Mr.

Mr. Bower in the reſt of his preface, by a known ſlander, falſely makes the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope a term of the Catholic communion, that he may fling out his peeviſh reflections: he confounds Franciſcan friars with the Fratricelli heretics, and the queſtion about the poverty of the Franciſcans, with that about the poverty in which Chriſt lived on earth, uſing one common purſe with his diſciples, as we read in the holy ſcriptures, in which divine books every thing is revealed, conſequently of faith: he confidently calls the primitive ages ſilent as to the pope's ſupremacy, without anſwering any one of the moſt trite inſtances of church-hiſtory, or paſſages of the fathers which clearly evince it: he paſſes over the great lights of ſanctity and learning which flouriſhed in the ſeventh, eighth, and other centuries, which he brands with the name of dark ages; and forgets that the coming of the Greeks after the council of Florence, and more after the taking of Conſtantinople by the Turks, brought all the oriental learning into the Weſt, and that the reſtorers of the Belles Lettres flouriſhed before the birth of Proteſtantiſm. The elegant and judicious Proteſtant author of The Minute Philoſopher, [Dial. 5. N. 25. T. 1. P. 324.] writes thus againſt the Deiſts: 'Who was it that tranſplanted and revived the Greek language and authors, and with them all polite arts and literature in the Weſt? Was it not chiefly Beſſarion, a cardinal, Marcus Maſurus, an archbiſhop, Theodore Gaza, a private clergyman? Has there been a greater and more renowned patron and reſtorer of elegant ſtudies in every kind ſince the days of Auguſtus Cæſar, than Leo X. pope of Rome? Did any writers approach the purity of the claſſics nearer than the cardinals Bembus and Sadoletus, or than the biſhops Jovius and Vida? Not to mention an endleſs number of eccleſiaſtics who flouriſhed on the other ſide of the Alps in the golden age (as the Italians call it) of Leo X, and wrote both in their own language, and in the Latin, after the beſt models of antiquity. The depravation of taſte under the decline of the Roman empire began, and the inundations of the Barbarians completed, the fall of the polite arts in the Weſt. Among the fathers, St. Athanaſius, St. Baſil, St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Chryſoſtom, and many others among the Greeks, were no ways inferior to the princes of the claſſics, even Demoſthenes and Iſocrates, and have infinite advantages above them in ſome reſpects. And the Latin church had a Cyprian, a Minutius Felix, a Lactantius,

tantius, a Jerome, &c. It is true, that moſt of the Latins and ſome of the Greeks neglected the polite arts, and partook of the general depravation of taſte of their age. But then the ſciences of faith and piety never languiſhed in the church. Before the revival of the Belles Lettres in the Weſt, ſacred ſtudies, and in particular thoſe of the holy ſcriptures, were cultivated, even in what are called the dark ages. The ſcriptures were accurately corrected from the Hebrew under Charlemagne: and by the Dominicans under St. Lewis, with learned notes from the Hebrew, 70, Origen, S. Jerome, &c. (2) Many Correctoria from the Hebrew of the 13th and more early ages are quoted by Robert Stephens, and ſome are ſtill extant. Lancfranc, St. Stephen Harding, abbot of Citeaux, &c. corrected carefully the Vulgate edition. (3) The Ciſtercians in 1109 corrected it again from the Hebrew, as Mabillon mentions. (4) Nicholas of Lyra in 1300, before him Raymundus Martini in his unparalleled 'Pugio Fidei' (out of which Galatinus ſtole his moſt admired parts,) Porket Salvago, a Carthuſian Monk of Genoa, in his admirable work called, 'Victoria Porcheti adverſus Judæos,' and many others, prove that critical learning on the holy ſcriptures was never neglected in the church, though always made the hand-maid to tradition, by which the ſcriptures themſelves were delivered down to us. Add Paul of Burgos, Auſtin Juſtiniani, and the other Divines employed by cardinal Ximenes in his Polyglott, &c. Criticiſm was not the means by which the primitive fathers attained the knowledge of faith and the ſcriptures, or promoted and defended the truths of the goſpels: and the light caſt on ſacred ſtudies, or the advantages reaped by the church from it, are very ſmall, eſpecially from the Rabbinical learning. Nevertheleſs an Origen and a St. Jerome flouriſhed among the fathers, and the church has never been without this ſuccour of criticiſm, nor have its paſtors been wanting in giving ſufficient encouragement to it, on the true advantages of which read the learned Morinus, in his 'Exercitationes Biblicæ.' If ſince printing it has been rendered

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(2) *See Lucas Brug, in Job* iii. *et Prov.* x. (3) *Cave Hiſt. liter. Mabill. Tr. des Etudes Monaſt. T.* 1. *C.* 10. *P.* 58. *et in T.* 1. *op. S. Bern. in fine. Rich. Simon, Pref. Crit. Nouv. Teſt.* (4) *Ib.*

rendered more eaſy, Catholics have eminently excelled in all its branches. The congregations of the French Benedictines are alone a ſufficient proof on the ſcriptures, languages, fathers, hiſtories both eccleſiaſtical and profane, and alſo in every part of polite literature. As to the learned languages and ſcriptures, to omit innumerable others, the name of Houbigand, the French oratorian, ought alone to ſtop the mouth of ſlander. Lord Bolingbroke makes it a complaint that in France the taſte of arts and ſciences runs too high, and thinks it would be better for commerce if they had fewer candidates; and if many of thoſe who employ themſelves in ſtaining paper, were occupied in making it. Productions in all parts daily ſhew how much the art of criticiſm is ſtudied. If it and the polite arts have been in ſome ages neglected, in this it is certainly carried to exceſs. An old philoſopher ſaid of the grammarians in the decline of the true taſte in the degenerating Roman ſtate, that by their affected and laboured niceties they had almoſt deſtroyed learning; and we may ſay in this preſent age, that criticiſm (which is good when governed by reaſon) has by an exceſs almoſt extinguiſhed in many writers both religion, reaſon, and true learning. Some ſmatterers in philoſophy having filled their heads with fond chimæras, and imaginary laws of nature, by the help of trigonometry, algebra, and fluxions, frame inconſiſtent ſyſtems or reveries, and pretend to build the world, and give laws to the Supreme Creator. Others trample down all authority, and pretend that wiſdom was born with them, whilſt they blaſphemouſly attack the attributes of the Deity, all the myſteries of faith, and the miracles and hiſtories of the Old and New Teſtament. At the ſame time their preſumption is ſcarce more ſurprizing than generally their ignorance is contemptible. The late noble writer, whoſe talents required a better culture and employment, and who from politics undertook to write againſt divine revelation, diſcovers in every page the moſt wretched and glaring ſophiſtry, falſe ideas in metaphyſics, and an aſtoniſhing ignorance in hiſtory both ſacred and profane, even where he dictates his oracles the moſt dogmatically. In his letters on hiſtory, in which he declares open war againſt the holy ſcriptures, he ſays no foundation of any new nation furniſhes authentic materials for hiſtory. Where he certainly forgot at leaſt the Jews and the Romans. He places the commencement of hiſtorical times

about

about 500 years after the Epoch of the Olympiads. By which he denies Thucydides and Xenophon to have been hiſtorians, and ranks the ages of Pericles and Alexander among the fables. He aſcribes the Alexandrine Chronicle to the monk George Syncellus, who certainly wrote 200 years after the other, &c. But to return: the proteſtations Mr. Bower makes of ſincerity, are very ſolemn! but theſe are an aggavation of hypocriſy, if the whole conduct and writings of a perſon give them the lye. He inſiſts in particular how much he renounced his own intereſt by becoming a Proteſtant. Every one knows that independence, marriage, a fortune in the world, and cheap applauſe, are often charms to a poor religious man who wants the ſpirit of his profeſſion, which obliges him to live in obedience, auſterity, and poverty, and who is incapable even of acquiring any thing to himſelf. Mr. Bower makes a very confident appeal, when he ſays, 'What I have forfeited by adhering to truth, moſt of the Roman Catholics in England know.' Thoſe who know any thing of him are ſenſible what he has forfeited in ſome reſpects: but they eaſily ſee that liberty, a bed-fellow, the figure and fortune of an eſquire, and the favour of the great, are a glittering exchange for the cloke of a poor private Jeſuit. Notwithſtanding his ſtudied profeſſion of impartiality, the ſlanders ſcattered in the preface give us ſufficiently to underſtand that whatever the blackeſt calumny, party-rage, envy, malice, faction, or revenge, have at any time invented againſt the ſee of Rome, is to be gathered into this artful hiſtory, impoſed upon the public with the utmoſt confidence, and ſet off with the moſt crafty art of hypocriſy, and pomp of eloquence: nay, new ſlanders and falſifications are every where employed.

He begins with St. Peter, and calls in queſtion the very foundation of the See of Rome by him. Calvin and ſome other adverſaries had done the ſame in the heat of paſſion: but ſuch a glaring obſtinacy ſhewed a cauſe deſperate, and betrayed a rage to a degree of madneſs. It is a wretched ſhift, when to defend a party a man undertakes to fight againſt the higheſt degree of moral evidence. Candid learned Proteſtants have been aſhamed of ſuch an extravagance, and have expreſsly wrote to confute it. Biſhop Pearſon, in a diſſertation on purpoſe, ſhews that no one ever did before Calvin, nor ever can with the leaſt ſhadow of grounds, doubt either that St. Peter founded the church

of

of Rome, or that the popes are his ſucceſſors. Read his poſthumous works, printed at London in 1688, from page 27 to 43. The ſame is acknowledged and proved by many others, as Grotius, (5) Hammond, (6) Uſher, Chamier, (7) Junius, Caſaubon, Scaliger, Peter du Moulin, Selden, &c.

St. Ignatius, the Diſciple of St. Peter, and his ſucceſſor in the See of Antioch, could not poſſibly be miſtaken when in his epiſtle to the Romans, N. 4. he ſaid he did not preſume to lay commands upon them as Peter and Paul had done. Papias, a diſciple of St. John, ſays that St. Peter preached at Rome, and there reſiſted Simon Magus, as Euſebius quotes [B. 2. ch. 15.] who confirms the ſame by the teſtimony of St. Clemens of Alexandria, [ib. ch. 14. 15.] St. Dionyſius, biſhop of Corinth, who lived in the ſecond age, ſays that St. Peter and St. Paul preached at Rome, and there ſuffered martyrdom, as we read in Euſebius, [b. 2. ch. 24 and 25.] who in the ſame place adds the teſtimony of Caius, a Prieſt of Rome under pope Zephyrin, and the firſt who wrote a hiſtory of the church: who even mentions the monuments of theſe two founders of the Roman church, then to be ſeen in that city. 'I can ſhew the trophies of the apoſtles, ſays he; for whether you go to the Vatican, or the Oſtian Road, you will meet with the monuments of them who have founded that church.' The words of St. Dionyſius of Corinth are: 'The merciful providence of God brings Peter, the greateſt and moſt undaunted of the apoſtles, and the principal and patron, with the virtue or power of all the reſt, to Rome.' St. Irenæus [b. 3. c. 3.] confutes all hereſies by the tradition of the church preſerved in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of biſhops from the apoſtles, particularly 'of the greateſt and the moſt ancient church, known to all, founded at Rome by the two moſt glorious apoſtles Peter and Paul.' He adds, that theſe two Apoſtles choſe Linus to govern the church after them: that to him ſucceeded Anacletus, and he gives the liſt of the reſt down to Elutherius then ſitting, the twelfth biſhop of Rome. He adds: 'to this church of Rome, on account of her more

(5) *In* 1 *Petr.* i. 13. (6) *Diſſert. de Epiſc.* (7) *T.* 2. *b.* 13. *c.* 4.

more chief principality, all other churches, that is, the faithful in all places, are bound to unite themſelves.' This holy father had been diſciple to St. Polycarp, and was made biſhop of Lyons in 177. Could he poſſibly be miſtaken in a fact of ſo notorious a nature, living ſo near in time, and occupying many years ſo dignified, and ſo near a Church? He whom St. Jerome juſtly ſtyles [in Iſa. c. 64.] 'an Apoſtolic Man, Biſhop and Martyr,' St. Ignatius, in his epiſtles, makes the diſtinction of this. See only on account of its prerogative above other churches. For he addreſſes himſelf to the reſt thus: 'to the Church at Epheſus, at Magneſia, at Smyrna, &c.' But to the Roman he changes his terms, as ſpeaking to the Metropolitan church over his own at Antioch, and over the world, and writes: 'to the church which preſides at Rome:' and again, 'which preſides in charity.' This its pre-eminence was acknowledged by its very adverſaries from the beginning. Tertullian when an heretic, and piqued in particular againſt the church of Rome, makes it a point of raillery to mention its paſtor by the title of 'Sovereign Pontiff, that is, Biſhop of Biſhops,' [de pudic. c. 1.] His irony would have been ridiculous, had not the biſhop of Rome claimed and exerciſed a juriſdiction over the reſt. In the ſame book he calls the biſhop of Rome Apoſtolical. Tertullian wrote in the ſecond and third ages, and is the moſt ancient Latin eccleſiaſtical writer. The Heathen hiſtorian Ammianus Marcellinus mentions the principal authority of the biſhops of Rome, [b. 15.] But to return to the teſtimony of the firſt fathers, Origen, quoted by Euſebius, [Hiſt. b. 2. c. 24.] ſays that St. Peter came to Rome, and was there crucified with his head downwards as he had deſired. His contemporary Tertullian calls Rome happy, becauſe it was watered with his blood. [Scorp. c. 15. l. 4. contr. Marcion, c. 5. de bapt.] He confutes the heretics by the tradition and ſucceſſion of the biſhops of Rome from St. Peter, who ordained Clement, [Præſcr. c. 36.] St. Irenæus had done the ſame. St. Optatus urged the ſame againſt the Donatiſts, [b. 2. p. 28.] 'One chair is the firſt of the marks of the Catholic Church. In this one chair Peter ſat firſt, to whom ſucceeded Linus, &c.' And again, p. 33. 'It has been proved that we are in the holy Catholic Church by the chair of Peter, which is ours.' St. Auguſtine employs this argument in the ſame manner. St Cyprian calls

Rome

Rome 'the chair of Peter, &c.' [Ep 55. ad Cornel.] St. Juſtin, Arnobius, Lactantius, Euſebius, St. Athanaſius, St. Jerome, St. Chryſoſtom, &c. in many places teſtify the ſame. What does our mighty champion oppoſe to ſo many concurring evidences? That this is not mentioned in ſcripture. Muſt we then reject all hiſtory which is not contained in ſcripture? Catholics allege ſcripture and tradition for the ſupremacy of St. Peter and his ſucceſſors. But his journey to Rome, and his foundation of that ſee, are points known by hiſtorical evidence, in which nothing can be more inconteſtable. Mr. Bower urges that tradition is a lyar, and alleges ſome falſe or uncertain opinions of the vulgar to prove it. Here he employs a wretched equivocation in the word tradition. If he reſtrains it to bare popular rumours without any ſufficient vouchers or authority, he may juſtly brand them with the epitaph which he makes uſe of. But if he means by tradition whatever is not mentioned in ſcripture, he muſt cut off all hiſtory, and the evidence of all our ſenſes. The ſilence of the Acts of the Apoſtles as to St. Peter's coming to Rome, is his formidable battery. But he cannot be ſuch a ſtranger to that ſacred book as not to know that St. Luke, after giving a general hiſtory of the apoſtles of the Church in the beginning, afterwards confines himſelf in that divine hiſtory to the voyages of St. Paul alone, whoſe companion he was. And Mr. Bower might as well infer from his ſilence that neither St. Peter nor any of the apoſtles except St. Paul, preached any where at all after their diſperſion. St. Paul, he ſays, did not meet him at Rome, Acts xxviii, and never names him in the epiſtles which he wrote from Rome. All this is many ways accounted for. St. Luke might omit their meeting: or St. Peter was moſt probably then abſent from Rome, preaching to other nations; as he muſt have been a great part of his time, according to the function of his apoſtolic miſſion. He might not be perſonally known to all thoſe to whom St. Paul wrote, if he was then in Rome; or there might be many other reaſons of ſuch an omiſſion. Our author, by way of a back intrenchment when he ſhall be driven from the firſt, advances that if St. Peter was ever at Rome, he was never himſelf biſhop of that city. But unluckily for him the ſame authorities expreſsly affirm that he ſat firſt in that chair, and was ſucceeded by Linus, &c. The primitive fathers and ancient councils call it unanimouſly, and at every turn, the chair of Peter, and cry out

that

that Peter ſpoke by his ſucceſſors, &c. Much more might be ſaid to deſtroy this calumny: for the epiſcopacy of St. Peter at Rome is proved by monuments, titles, privileges, and churches in that city, from the moſt early ages of Chriſtianity, the tombs of the two Apoſtles always ſhewn there, and the unanimous authority of all the fathers and Chriſtian writers of all countries, even thoſe who lived neareſt to thoſe times, and whilſt monuments of every ſort were extant. Moreover the nature of the fact ſo public, ſo intereſting, ſo well known in thoſe times, and ſo little liable to miſtake, renders the proofs more inconteſtable. An univerſal ſcepticiſm muſt be ſettled in hiſtory before a doubt can be moved about this point: and we may with equal reaſon pretend to call in queſtion the exiſtence of Cæſar. Mr. Bower cloſes this article with a piece of wit upon an old chair in which ſeveral ancient popes had been crowned, and in which ſome think St. Peter himſelf ſat: but the twelve labours of Herculus were diſcovered in the year 1662 to be carved on it. That circumſtance however ſeems of no importance: for a curious chair of the heathens might have been afterwards made uſe of by Chriſtian Saints, as their porphyry and fine ſtone monuments of the dead are commonly uſed by Chriſtians in thoſe countries where they abound. He ſays the chair was diſcarded upon this diſcovery. This will be no proof that popes ſought to put a cheat on travellers by ſuffering the piece of antiquity to be ſhewn with that epithet. At leaſt, every body may think of the hiſtory of the chair what ſhall ſeem moſt probable to him: the Apoſtolic See of St. Peter will never be thought intereſted in it.

In ſeveral of the firſt popes, our hiſtorian is offended at the title of martyr ſometimes given them. This indeed is omitted as to ſeveral in St. Irenæus and others: but it is given to ſome of thoſe omitted by the former, in the Liberian calendar, the moſt ancient of all others, the laſt part of it being finiſhed under pope Liberius, and moſt of it ſeeming to be extracted from the regiſter of the Roman church: likewiſe in the Canon of the Roman Maſs, than which the judicious Boſſuet ſays nothing is more venerable, more ancient or more inconteſtable after the ſcriptures. The ſacramentaries of Gelaſius I. and of St. Gregory confirm the ſame in ſome. Moreover, many who did not die by the ſword, have deſerved the title of martyrs by ſufferings

ferings and perſecutions, as St. Cyprian ſhews [Ep. 37, &c.] The popes were above all others, expoſed to continual dangers of martyrdom whilſt the ſenate and many magiſtrates were inclined to perſecution even under the moſt favourable reigns. Mr. Bower, with ſome modern French critics, will have Cletus and Anacletus to be one and the ſame man. If ſo, then the ſame holy pope is commemorated on different days, as St. Agnes, and ſome other Saints are. But Orſi [b. 2. n. 29. T. 1. p. 277.] ſhews them to have been diſtinct popes, upon the authority of the firſt part of the Liberian Chronicle, written under pope Pontian, and probably from a public regiſter. See it in Bucherius's Paſchal Cycle, or in Bollandus [April 21, p. 22.] The Greeks might eaſily be led into a miſtake by the reſemblance of the names, as Euſebius confounds every where Novatus and Novatian. The falſe decretals of Pſeudo Iſidore cannot be charged on the popes, as our author owns, p. 10, being notoriouſly the invention of ſome German mean impoſtor of the ninth age. Pope Nicholas I. and others have quoted them, believing them genuine, but no pope ever gave any ſanction to them, not even thoſe who authorized the editions of the decretals, as Reiffenſtuel, Smaltzgruben, Van-Eſpen, and other canoniſts prove, and as Mabillon takes notice, [Tr. on Monaſtic Studies.] A thing they might have as eaſily done as have made the new decretals. This alone is a plain proof that none of them thought of countenancing any forgery, nor looked upon them as the ſtays of their ſupremacy, which was certainly as well eſtabliſhed in the ninth century when they appeared as at preſent. Mr. Bower himſelf dates this ſupremacy from pope Zozimus, or at leaſt from the tyrant Phocas, long before the falſe decretals. No ſooner was the impoſture of thoſe letters diſcovered, but the writers of the very See of Rome were the firſt to demonſtrate it, as may be ſeen in Baronius and in all other learned men in that communion. So black a calumny as that of employing forgeries for its ends, (which doctrine and practice the church has ever deteſted) is retorted on its author, unleſs he is able to ſupport what he advances: and the proofs ought to be proportioned to the charge. But every thing may be expected from an author who ſticks not, notoriouſly and in the face of the ſun, to knowingly and deſignedly falſify and miſrepreſent the doctrine of the church, and the writings of the ancients: of which,

this

this his performance is a continued tiſſue of examples. To even point them out would require volumes as large as his, and more leiſure to copy them than I could be maſter of. I am extremely ſenſible how grievous the charge is of deſignedly or maliciouſly falſifying the known truth, eſpecially in points of the utmoſt conſequence; how great an affront ſuch a crime is againſt the God of truth; what an inſult to mankind, and offence againſt ſociety or the intercourſe of men with one another, eſſentially depending on the laws of ſincerity and truth. But he who ſticks not to ſo daringly expoſe himſelf to the world, is the publiſher of his own diſingenuity. Indeed his romantic ſtories make us remember the remark of Cicero, that 'when a man has once paſs'd the bounds of modeſty: he becomes compleatly impudent.' When I read ſuch falſe imputations in a Proteſtant author, I preſume him ſincere, but impoſed upon. But I cannot ſee how this can be the caſe of Mr. Bower, how fain ſoever I would perſuade myſelf ſo. For having been educated in the Catholic ſchools he could not but know that, though ſome private divines think that the pope, by the aſſiſtance of a ſpecial providence, cannot err in deciſions of faith ſolemnly publiſhed by him, with the mature advice of his council or of the clergy and divines of his church: yet that this is denied by others; and that the learned Boſſuet, and many others, eſpecially of the ſchool of Sorbon, have written warmly againſt that opinion; and that no Catholic looks upon it as an article of faith or term of communion. It is the infallibility of the whole church whether aſſembled in a general council or diſperſed over the world, of which they ſpeak in their controverſial diſputations. Yet this writer at every turn confounds theſe two things together, only to calumniate, and to impoſe on the public. If he had proved that ſome Popes had erred in faith, he would have no more defeated the article of their ſupremacy, than he would diſinherit a king by arraigning him of bad policy. The Catholic Faith teaches the pope to be the ſupreme paſtor of the church, eſtabliſhed by Chriſt, and that this church founded by Chriſt, on a rock, ſhall never be overcome by hell, or ceaſe to be his true ſpouſe: for he has promiſed that his ſpirit ſhall direct it into all truth to the end of the world. But Mr. Bower never found the infallibility of the Pope in our creed, and knows very well

that

that no ſuch article is propoſed by the Church, or required of any one. Therefore the whole chain of theſe boaſtings, which is conducted throughout his work, falls to the ground. They indeed are only founded in other ſlanders, I wiſh I could have ſaid miſtakes. None of the facts which he miſrepreſents, ſhew any Popes to have erred in faith. In the life of St. Clement, becauſe that Pope exhorted the Corinthians to peace and union, he infers that he claimed no juriſdiction: as if St. Paul and Chriſt himſelf did not uſe exhortations and intreaties to ſinners, without any prejudice to their authority, and even infallibility? How many has this preſent Pope (Benedict XIV.) addreſſed both to the whole church, and to particular places and perſons? On Pope Victor, p. 36, he triumphs, pretending that he approved the prophecies of the Montaniſts. It is true that he was at firſt deceived by relations of their auſterities and pretended ſanctity. And how eaſy was this about things which paſſed in Phrygia, in a very diſtant part in the Eaſt? He therefore diſpatched letters of his peace and communion to the pretended prophets, and thus received them and their prophecies: but was immediately better informed by the arrival of Praxeas from that country, what ſort of perſons they were, and recalled his anſwer to their letters. This we learn from Tertullian when he was himſelf a Montaniſt [l. adv. Prax. c. 1.] By this account of an adverſary the Pope was only deceived in a perſonal fact, not in any point of faith: he never approved any falſe doctrine in them, but as ſoon as he heard of their errors, he condemned both their perſons and their pretended prophecies. The beſt critics think that Montanus and his followers did not advance any heretical doctrine at firſt, but began firſt by hypocriſy to gain a reputation. At leaſt, the Pope ſhews by his very conduct that he was not informed of their errors when he granted them his communion. For he learned from Praxeas, not any new point of faith, but only informations about perſons and facts. I wonder our hiſtorian would mention this hiſtory, leſt his reader ſhould take notice that this early Pope extended his juriſdiction into the moſt remote provinces in the Eaſt, and that he was appealed to from thence. Mr. Bower ſeems to own that Pope Victor challenged an univerſal juriſdiction in threatening to excommunicate the Aſiatics for celebrating Eaſter on the ſame day with the Jews: for he calls this 'the firſt eſſay

of Papal Juriſdiction,' p. 37. The cauſe was judged afterwards by the general council of Nice ſufficient to deſerve a cenſure: but charity recommended toleration; and on the remonſtrance of St. Irenæus, St. Victor ſuſpended the execution of that ſentence, as Euſebius expreſsly writes, [hiſt. l. 5. c. 24.] How then could Mr. Bower infer that no one regarded the excommunication of Victor; for all 'continued to communicate with the Aſiatics, as before?' Why, ſo did Victor himſelf and his ſucceſſors till that people was reclaimed by mild condeſcenſion: for this Pope either did not actually excommunicate them, or if he did, he immediately recalled the ſentence, as is evident from Euſebius. At leaſt Polycrates and the other Aſiatics were not diſpoſed to acquieſce, reſumes our hiſtorian; and therefore they did not own his juriſdiction. His conſequence is no ways juſt. They might have ſubmitted, had the ſentence been actually pronounced. If they had not done it, many are rebellious againſt lawful ſuperiors, or may think a lawful ſuperior exceeds his authority, or abuſes it beyond the bounds of reaſon. The Aſiatics were blameable; but thought they ought to be indulged in a point of diſcipline, out of veneration to their firſt founder St. John the Evangeliſt. Chriſt eſtabliſhed a government in his church to preſerve order and unity: yet particular churches have their rights, which the ſuperior authority is not to invade, but to maintain. Mr. Bower, in the life of St. Fabianus, p. 50. repeats his uſual ſlander that the belief of the infallibility of the Pope is an article of our faith, and that to deny it 'would, in theſe days, be deemed heretical,' &c. Could impudence itſelf advance a more notorious falſehood? much leſs are deliberation, advice of his clergy, and the like means which prudence preſcribes in affairs, eſteemed leſs neceſſary in the Papal Conſiſtory now than in the days of Fabian and Cornelius, as is ironically inſinuated, p. 50. and 53. Mr. Bower remembers a greater council of Biſhops convened at Rome by Pope Benedict XIII. than that which was held by Cornelius which gave occaſion to his exclamations. Nay, the Pope's ordinary conſiſtories or congregations may be called very venerable and learned councils, without which he does nothing of great moment.

LETTER

LETTER III.

On Pope Stephen, the Author's Plagiariſm, and the Roman Breviary.

ALL the actions of Pope Stephen are moſt groſsly miſrepreſented by our hiſtorian. The firſt is, the affair of Marcian, biſhop of Arles, primate of Gaul, a Novatian heretic. The Gauliſh biſhops wrote to the Pope, Stephen, to beg that he might be depoſed, and to St. Cyprian in Africa, to intreat the concurrence of his zeal. St. Cyprian having no juriſdiction in Gaul could do no more than join the clergy of Gaul in ſoliciting St. Stephen by a letter [ep. 67. ed. Pam.] in which he ſays: 'It is neceſſary that you ſend moſt ample letters to our fellow biſhops in Gaul, that they no longer ſuffer the obſtinate Marcian to inſult our college.—Write to the province and to the people of Arles letters, by which Marcian being excommunicated, another may be ſubſtituted in his place.—Acquaint us, if you pleaſe, who ſhall have been placed in the ſee of Marcian, &c.' Could he in more expreſs words give teſtimony to the juriſdiction of St. Stephen in Gaul? How can our author repreſent St. Cyprian equal to him in this affair? 'Dirigantur in provinciam et ad plebem Arelate conſiſtentem a te litteræ, quibus abſtento Marciano, alius in locum ejus ſubſtituatur.'

The ſecond action recorded of St. Stephen, is as follows: Baſilides and Martialis were depoſed in a Synod: Baſilides reſigned his ſee: but afterwards 'going to Rome, ſays St. Cyprian, ep. 68. he deceived our Collegue Stephen at a diſtance, and ignorant of the truth which was concealed from him, that he might be unjuſtly reſtored to the biſhopric from which he had been juſtly depoſed:—Ut ad ſuperiora peccata ejus fallaciæ et circumventionis crimen acceſſerit.' He returned home with letters of reſtitution from the Pope. The Spaniſh biſhops conſulted St. Cyprian, who anſwered in the words juſt quoted, that they were to be regarded ſtill as juſtly depoſed, becauſe the ſentence of Stephen was ſurreptitious, and obtained by fraud: for Martialis claimed reſtitution with Baſilides, their cauſe having been pretty much the ſame. Pamelius and others

infer the ſupremacy of the Pope from the recourſe of Baſilides to him to be reſtored, and from St. Cyprian's anſwer, in which he ſuppoſes the authority by only alleging the craft and cheat by which the ſentence had been obtained. Mr. Bower gives an oppoſite turn to this whole affair, and pretends that the Spaniſh biſhops denied the ſupremacy of the Pope by refuſing to acquieſce, and by writing to St. Cyprian. But the reaſon is ſpecified; becauſe the Pope had been notoriouſly circumvented by fraud. On which account, we cannot doubt but he was afterwards better informed by them, and their proceedings confirmed.

But the chief action of St. Stephen was his zeal againſt St. Cyprian about the validity of baptiſm given by the heretics, which the African erroneouſly denied. Mr. Bower pretends that St. Stephen fell into the contrary error, and affirmed all baptiſm given by heretics, tho' not in the name of the Trinity, to be valid, even that of the Montaniſts and Marcionites, which was afterwards condemned by the whole church. No ſlander that ever was invented againſt any Pope, can eſcape our hiſtorian. But the ancients univerſally clear St. Stephen, and expreſsly ſay that he defended the pure truth, and the genuine tradition of the church from the apoſtles. This is the teſtimony of Euſebius [hiſt. b. 7. ch. 3.] of St. Auguſtine [l 5. de bapt. c. 23.] and in many other places; of Vincent of Lerins [Comm. c. 9.] &c. The words indeed aſcribed to him by St. Cyprian are very general [ep. 73, 74.] 'From what ſoever hereſy.' But Firmilian himſelf, his warmeſt adverſary, adds this qualification, 'having invoked the Trinity of names of the Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt' [ep. 75. ad Cypr.] The conduct of St. Stephen in that affair was highly applauded by St. Auguſtine, and by all antiquity, both in his zeal for the truth which was ſoon after canonized by the great councils of Arles and Nice, and in his charitable toleration to gain thoſe who were engaged in an error, when their heat ſhould be cooled. On the contrary, both the opinion and conduct of his antagoniſts have been always univerſally diſapproved. St. Cyprian atoned for his fault by his great merits and martyrdom: and certainly he would not have reſiſted if he had ſeen a definition publiſhed and received by the church. At leaſt St. Stephen publiſhed no decree in the matter: for a private letter is not ſuch, and his anſwer only was, 'let nothing new be introduced, but let that which has been

been delivered down to us, be maintained,' as St. Vincent of Lerins gives his words. The reſpect which we owe to the names and virtue of St. Cyprian and Firmilian oblige us to draw a curtain over theſe faults, as St. Auguſtine admoniſhes us, ſpeaking of Firmilian: 'I will not touch upon what he in anger let fall againſt Stephen' [l. 5. de bapt. c. 25. p. 158.] Yet Mr. Bower, far from excuſing, loudly proclaims and canonizes their exceſſes againſt St. Stephen, whoſe indiſputable glory it was to have maintained the truth with equal zeal and charity. Of which Vincent of Lerins, an ancient, moſt learned and judicious father, writes thus [Comm. p. 351.] 'Pope Stephen of bleſſed memory, Biſhop of the Apoſtolic See, ſtood up, with his other Collegues indeed, but more than the reſt, thinking it fitting, I believe, that he ſhould go beyond them as much by the ardour of his faith, as he was above them by the authority of his See.——The holy and prudent man underſtood that the rule of piety admits nothing new, but that all things, with the ſame fidelity with which they were received, are to be alſo delivered down to our children, and that we are not to draw religion to our fancy, but to follow it in all things.' Mr. Bower cannot produce one ancient father or writer who does not extol St Stephen, and condemn St. Cyprian both for their doctrine, and for the manner in which they carried on the conteſt. Can he read St. Cyprian himſelf, and find any other excuſe for him but that which St. Auguſtine ſo often repeats: That he compenſated his fault by his abundant charity, and by his martyrdom? [See St. Aug. l. 1. de bap. c. 18. p. 94. T. 9. &c.] Had St. Cyprian ſeen the deciſion of the church in that controverſy we cannot doubt of his docility and ſubmiſſion, from the principle which he lays down for ſuch caſes, [l. de unit. eccl. p. 83. and ep. 55.] Nay, St. Auguſtine was perſuaded from his virtue that he actually receded from his error when the heat of the conteſt was over, and he began to enter into himſelf. At leaſt by St. Stephen's condeſcenſion, no ſentence or definition was then pronounced, and peace, and charity in mutual communion were preſerved betwixt them, as St. Auguſtine often repeats: 'Stephen, ſays he, thought of excommunicating them——but being endowed with the bowels of charity, he determined to remain in union.——The peace of Chriſt overcame in their hearts' [l. 5. de bapt. c. 25.]

How

How then could Mr. Bower write, p. 70, that 'Stephen, tranſported with rage,——cut off from his communion all the Biſhops who had aſſiſted at the council of Cyprian, &c.'

The adverſaries of the Popes ought, from their principles, to be rather angry with St. Cyprian whoſe opinion in condemning the baptiſm, orders and other Sacraments of heretics as invalid, was founded in his extreme averſion to hereſy or ſchiſm, even for the ſmalleſt differences in faith, as in the Novatians: whence he called St Stephen a favourer of heretics. But they forgive every thing if it carry any oppoſition to a Pope: and they pretend from this diſpute, that St. Cyprian did not acknowledge the ſupremacy of the Pope: in which our author founds an imaginary triumph. But does a rector of a pariſh deny the juriſdiction of a dioceſan if he engages in a conteſt with him about what he thinks a privilege or right? If St. Cyprian and Firmilian uſed ſarcaſtical inſinuations of too arbitrary proceedings, this ſhews in them a great frailty and paſſion, on which account St. Auguſtine would have a veil drawn over it for their ſake: but it can never be conſtrued a ſhaking off the authority. We have ſeen in our own memory, and read of, conteſts with the holy See, carried on with warmth, and often with indecent paſſion, by thoſe who were ready to lay down their lives for its ſupremacy. Witneſs the great biſhop of Meaux, Boſſuet, who wrote ſo ſtrongly for this ſupremacy; yet lent his pen, and with great heat, to a party engaged in the warmeſt debate againſt that See, in his defence of the declaration of the French Clergy. St. Cyprian even when he was moſt vehement, tacitly owns the juriſdicton of the Pope, when he ſays in his council: 'let none of us ſet up for Biſhop of Biſhops.' No Pope ever took that falſe title for various eſſential reaſons. But St. Cyprian in his anger tacitly means by it the uſe which St. Stephen made of his ſuperior authority over other biſhops, which he in his heat unreaſonably thought ſtrained by him into oppreſſion. For though the queſtion is a matter of faith, St. Cyprian and his partiſans took it falſely only to belong to diſcipline: whence he imagined thoſe churches which were in poſſeſſion of the practice of rebaptiſing all heretics, ought to have been ſuffered to retain their cuſtom. But by this ironical title he evidently ſhews that St. Stephen claimed and exerciſed a ſupremacy or ſuperior juriſdiction: nor does he deny ſuch an authority,

rity, which if he could have done, he certainly would never have ſpared. He therefore acknowledged it, though he thought it ſtretched too far in compelling churches to change what he imagined to be their particular and ancient diſcipline: which was his erroneous notion of the queſtion in debate. Firmilian likewiſe, in his indecent heat, owns that St. Stephen challenged that ſuperiority in the church, nor does he dare to diſpute it, but only makes a groundleſs reproach, as if St. Stephen had urged it with boaſting: 'Stephen, ſays he, [Ep. 75. ad Cypr.] boaſts the eminency of his See, and alleges his ſucceſſion to St. Peter, on whom the foundations were laid.' On other occaſions St. Cyprian directly eſtabliſhes the ſupremacy of the Biſhop of Rome. Speaking of the ſchiſmatics who had fled frm Carthage to Rome, he ſays: 'they preſume to ſail to the Chair of Peter, and to the Head Church, the ſource of Sacerdotal Unity—whither perfidy cannot find acceſs.' [Ep. 59. ed: Pam: p. 265.] He calls it in another place, 'the See of Peter, and the origin of the Sacerdotal Chair.' [Ep. 55. ed: Pam: al. 59. p. 243.] He ſays that all the hereſies take their birth from hence, 'becauſe men do not go to the ſource of truth, to the Head, to the doctrine of the Heavenly Maſter—The road is plain and ſhort, pointed out to us by the words of Chriſt to Peter: Thou art Peter, &c.' [l. de Unit. Eccl. p. 76.] In that ſame Book he places the centre of unity in the See of Peter: 'for, ſays he, Chriſt has built his Church upon 'one who is Peter: and has placed one chair. He has in-'deed given to all Biſhops the full participation of power 'equal to govern their flocks, all deriving their authority 'from Chriſt: but the beginning ariſes from unity in 'Peter.' Where he means an unity of juriſdiction, not in words only, or in a bare ſymbol of unity, which could be of no effect, and would neither anſwer the end, nor the inſtitution, nor the diſtinction implied by ſuch a foundation in one. The learned Proteſtant Divine and Hiſtorian H. Dodwell confeſſes [Diſſ Cypr. 7.] that St. Cyprian evidently places his principle of unity in ſuch a manner that the ſupremacy muſt neceſſarily follow from it: which is confirmed in ſtronger terms by the French Calviniſt, Armand de la Chapelle, T. 10. p. 35. In examining this hiſtorial point I had almoſt launched into a controverſial diſſertation: wherefore I check myſelf. For it is not my deſign to gather, or ſet in their true light, the

proofs

proofs which Catholics produce in favour of the ſupremacy of the See of Rome. I confine myſelf to conſider the hiſtory before me. Mr. Bower, p. 65, quotes an oratorial elogium of St. Gregory Nazianzen, [Or. 18. p. 28.] in which he ſays St. Cyprian preſided over all nations; but he forgets to add the cloſe of the period, 'wherever his fame or admiration is carried.' The Orator is ſpeaking in that whole page of the luſture of his virtues, and ſays he ſhone by them and by his learning over all nations. What affinity has this with the expreſſions of the prerogatives of the Apoſtolic See of Rome in the fathers?

It is neither your deſire, nor my inclination to follow this hiſtorian throughout his work, which it would be too tedious a taſk, and a great loſs of time to even read over. In curſorily turning over the leaves I continually obſerve how he borrows quotations, often in the lump, from others, eſpecially from Tillemont or M. d'A——: I was ſtopped, p. 79, by finding St. Baſil on Synods among the quotations. I have often read the works of St. Hilary and St. Athanaſius which bear that title. But whoever has been the leaſt converſant in the writings of the Fathers, or in the hiſtories of their works, muſt know too well thoſe of St. Baſil not to be ſtartled at ſuch a novelty: for no treatiſe was ever aſcribed to him under that title, or on ſuch a ſubject. I took it at firſt for an erratum of the printer; but found a long diſcant upon it, all built upon the ſame miſtake, and St. Baſil often named. An author a little converſant in the original writers would have been incapable of ſuch a blunder. 'O Imitatores ſervum pecus.' The truth is that Mr. Bower miſtook St. Baſil for St. Athanaſius; nor do I charge him herein with any wilful infidelity. But he is evidently guilty of one in this paſſage, when he accuſes Baronius of corrupting deſignedly St. Baſil's text, againſt all laws of honour and honeſty. He had read I ſuppoſe in Tillemont that Baronius was led into a miſtake by the old faulty Latin tranſlation, which Montfaucon has rectified in his late verſion, p. 758. How could he improve this into a wilful infidelity of Baronius, with all his own unaccountable blunders, which draw his invectives upon himſelf?—Mr. Bower follows the marginal references of Tillemont ſo ſervilely as to quote from him, I ſuppoſe, the ſame old edition of St. Athanaſius de Synodis, [p. 918.] though every where by his blunder under the name of St. Baſil.

His

His boaſted defence of Marcellinus againſt the church of Rome itſelf, as he ſays, p. 80, is all borrowed from the writers of that church, who unanimouſly, long before him, have refuted the falſe acts of his fall coined from the forgeries of the Donatiſts. See Natalis Alexander, Tillemont, Orſi, &c. All his other great diſcoveries of falſe legends, &c. are evidently pirated from the ſame authors, who furniſh him the proofs and reflections which he boaſts of, as every one who has read them plainly ſees. Nothing is his own beſides the continual miſrepreſentations of facts and corruptions of his authors. It would require volumes to follow him through all his ſlanders, which are ſufficiently cleared and overthrown by the naked truth drawn from the original writers in our church-hiſtorians, as Natalis Alexander, Tillemont, Ceiller, Orſi, the learned authors of the Acts of the Saints, &c. to whom I refer you in whatever parts you deſire to be ſatisfied.

I only beg leave to make ſome general obſervations. And firſt, that it is very unjuſt to charge the Popes or the Catholic Church with countenancing knowingly falſe legends, ſeeing all the divines of that communion unanimouſly condemn all ſuch forgeries as lyes in things of great moment, and grievous ſins; and all the Councils, Popes, and other Biſhops, have always expreſſed the greateſt horror of ſuch villainies, which no cauſe or circumſtances whatever can authorize, and which in things relating to religion are always of the moſt heinous nature. Hence the authors when detected, have been always puniſhed with the utmoſt ſeverity. Dr. Burnet himſelf confeſſes that thoſe who feigned a revelation at Baſil (of which he gives a long detail with falſe circumſtances in his letters of his travels,) were all burnt at ſtakes for it: which we read more exactly related by Surius in his commentary of his own times. The truth is, that many falſe legends of true martyrs were forged by heretics, as we ſee in thoſe of St. George condemned by Pope Gelaſius I. as many falſe Goſpels were ſoon after the birth of Chriſtianity, of which we have the names of near 50 extant. Other wicked or miſtaken perſons have been ſometimes guilty of a like impoſture. A Prieſt at Epheſus forged acts of St. Paul's voyages out of veneration for that Apoſtle; and was depoſed for it by St. John the Evangeliſt, as we learn from Tertullian. To inſtance examples of this nature would

would form a complete hiſtory: For the Church has always moſt ſeverely condemned all manner of forgeries. Sometimes the more virtuous and remote from fraud a perſon is, the more unwilling he is to ſuſpect an impoſture in others. Some great and good men have been impoſed upon by lyes, and have given credit to falſe hiſtories: but without being privy to the forgery, and nothing erroneous, dangerous, or prejudicial, was contained in what they unwarily admitted. However, if credulity in private hiſtories was too eaſy in any former age, certainly ſcepticiſm and infidelity are the characters of this in which we live. No hiſtories except thoſe of holy Scriptures are propoſed as parts of Divine Revelation or articles of faith: all others reſt upon their bare hiſtorical authority. They who do not think this good and ſufficient in any narrations, do well to ſuggeſt modeſtly their reaſons: yet may look upon them at leaſt as parables, and leave others the liberty of judging for themſelves without offence. But Mr. Bower ſays, p. 177, 'The Roman Breviary is the moſt authentic book the church of Rome has after the Scripture—It would be leſs dangerous, at leaſt in Italy, to deny any truth revealed in the ſcripture, than to queſtion any fable related in the Breviary.' Catholic divines teach that every tittle in the holy Scriptures is ſacred, divinely inſpired, and the word of God, dictated by the Holy Ghoſt. Even the definitions of general councils do not enjoy an equal privilege. They are indeed the oracles of an unerring guide in the doctrine of faith, which guide received together with the Scriptures, the true ſenſe and meaning of the articles of faith contained in them, and by the ſpecial protection of the Holy Ghoſt, invariably preſerves the ſame, by tradition from father to ſon, according to the promiſes of Chriſt. But the church receives no new revelations of faith, and adds nothing to that which was taught by the Apoſtles. Secondly, its deciſions are not ſupernaturally infallible in matters of fact, as the Scripture-hiſtories are, but only in matters of faith. Nor do Catholics ſay that its expreſſions even in deciſions of faith are ſtrictly dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, or ſuggeſted from him by an immediate revelation or inſpiration, but only that the Church is directed by his particular guidance according to his divine truths revealed to, and delivered to his Church by, his Apoſtles. As to the Roman Breviary, the prayers conſiſt, for the greateſt part, of the Pſalms and other parts of the holy Scriptures, to which the ſame reſpect

is due which we pay to the divine books. The ſhort leſſons from the homilies or other works of approved fathers, eſpecially thoſe fathers who are mentioned by Gelaſius I. in his decree, carry with them the authority of their venerable authors. As it was the cuſtom in the primitive ages to read in the Churches or Aſſemblies the acts of the moſt illuſtrious martyrs, of which frequent mention is made in thoſe of St. Polycarp, &c; ſome ſhort hiſtories of the martyrs and other ſaints have been always inſerted into the Breviary, to which only an hiſtorical aſſent is due. Whence they have been ſometimes altered and amended. Theſe are chiefly ſuch as were judged authentic, and probable by the Cardinals Baronius and Bellarmin, who reviſed theſe leſſons in the laſt correction under Clement VIII. Gavant, who was himſelf one of the reviſers of the Breviary, and ſecretary to the congregation, writes thus: [In Breviar. Sect. 5. c. 12. n. 15. p. 18.] 'The ſecond leſſons from the hiſtories of the ſaints were reviſed by Bellarmin and Baronius, who rejected what could be juſtly called in queſtion. In which difficult taſk they thought it beſt to reſtore the truth of hiſtory with the leaſt change poſſible, and to retain thoſe things which had a certain degree of probability, and had the authority of ſome grave voucher, though the contrary ſentiment had perhaps more patrons. In computing the years of the Popes the Chronology of Baronius was judged the moſt exact, and retained.' Hiſtorical facts no ways revealed or contained in Scripture cannot be made an object of divine faith. If edifying hiſtories are inſerted into the Church office, they ſtand upon their own credit. Such only ought to be choſen which are eſteemed authentic: this rule has been always followed when any were compiled. If the compilers are found afterwards to have been miſtaken, it is no where forbid to correct them. This has been often done by the order of ſeveral Popes. Mr. Bower ſees this attempted by thoſe French Hiſtorians whom he has before him. On which account, I ſuppoſe, he reſtrains his remark to Italy. But can he be ignorant that the learned men in Italy do the ſame in all their works. The learned Dominican Joſeph Orſi, ſecretary to the congregation of the Index, a perſon highly eſteemed by the Pope, in his excellent church-hiſtory, dedicated to his Holineſs, much commended by him, Cardinal Querini, and all others at Rome, corrects frequently hiſtories read in the Breviary; and the Popes have ordered ſeveral of them

them to be reformed. How then can any one ſay, that in Italy it would be ſafer to deny any part of the Scripture than an hiſtory in the Breviary? Every one may believe or diſbelieve, according to his own opinion of the hiſtorical veidence, the circumſtance of the ſnow in the dedication of the Baſilic of St. Mary the greater, &c. As to the baptiſm of Conſtantine the great, Mr. Bower only follows Tillemont and many other Catholic hiſtorians in ſubſcribing to the account given by Euſebius, which is adopted by Orſi, &c. As to the donation of Rome to the popes by Conſtantine the great, it is certain from the letters of St. Gregory the great, &c. that the popes poſſeſſed, by donations, very large eſtates not only in Rome and other parts of Italy, but alſo in Sicily, Gaul, &c. which enabled them to perform very great charities even in the Eaſt, as we find they had been accuſtomed to do from the firſt ages. See the lives of St. Clement, St. Dionyſius, &c. It is alſo certain that their ſovereignty in Rome was not an unjuſt uſurpation, during the troubles of Italy; for it was at leaſt confirmed to them by the emperor Charlemagne, as Natalis Alexander himſelf proves: and the greateſt part of their other territories was the famous legacy of the virtuous Maud, counteſs of Tuſcany. That pope Sylveſter preſided by his legates in the council of Nice, ſee well proved by Dom Ceiller. He and Orſi may be compared with our author, and both confronted with the original writers, in the hiſtories of the other councils and controverted facts, by thoſe who deſire to be informed of the truth.

LETTER IV.

On the intention in the adminiſtration of a ſacrament: on confeſſion of ſins: falſe reliques: pope Damaſus.

AS Mr. Bower puts on every ſhape to oppoſe all deciſions of the church, he ſeems, p. 96, to make an apology for the Donatiſts rebaptiſing heretics, after that error was condemned by the great council of Arles, when all ſuch to whom that decree was ſufficiently notified, could not be excuſed from hereſy. The author makes, in this place, a bitter digreſſion againſt the neceſſity of an intention in

in the miniſter of a ſacrament, to confer it, which he calls an impious and unchriſtian doctrine. If he would read Juenin or Piette on that queſtion, he would learn that he does not diſtinguiſh articles of the Catholic faith from the opinions of ſome ſchoolmen. But all of them teach that the mercy of God would ſome way or other provide for the ſalvation of a perſon ſo abſolved, with a defect in the miniſter only. By which proviſo all his abſurdities fall to the ground. Indeed a deſire of the ſacrament, with all neceſſary conditions of contrition, will ſupply the want of it, as St. Ambroſe ſays of Valentinian the younger, who was murdered whilſt only a catechumen, and as St. Dionyſius of Alexandria determined in a memorable example, in Euſebius [Hiſt. b. 7. ch. 9.] From which we learn that we ought not to be ſcrupulouſly anxious about the like conditions of ſalvation after a prudent care and moral certainty. Such a practical certainty ſuffices in our ſpiritual no leſs than in our corporal concerns, and our preſent condition does not admit any greater, unleſs Mr. Bower would carry Pyrrhoniſm as far as its firſt author did who pretended to doubt whether he met a waggon when he ſaw it before him, and would not make way for it: by which phrenzy he would have been often killed, if his friends had not hawled him out of the danger, as Diogenes Laertius relates.

It is ſomthing ſurprizng to find in our author the repetition of the uſual calumny, that the confeſſion of ſins to a Prieſt is an encouragement to ſin. He knows that the ſacrament of penance eſſentially requires, and is compounded of, all the different acts of penitence, as its ingredients or conſtituent parts, each of which, even taken ſingly and out of the ſacrament, is a powerful antidote againſt ſin: ſuch are fervent prayer, the moſt rigorous ſelf-examination, a moſt ſincere ſorrow and deteſtation of ſin above all things, a firm purpoſe of never ſinning, and of ſhunning all dangerous temptations and occaſions, and of employing the moſt effectual preſervatives and remedies both general and particular; the encouragement, advice and inſtructions of an impartial director, a perſon uſually well experienced in the ſpiritual warfare; immediate actual reſtitution of all injuſtices whether in words or actions, &c. Experience alſo daily ſhews that nothing is a more effectual curb to vice than this ſacrament, which its very adverſaries themſelves have often acknowledged. The Proteſtants had no ſooner laid

laid it aſide than they found a general neglect of daily prayer, and an almoſt univerſal depravation of manners viſibly to ſucceed among them, as Luther [Poſtil. in Dom. 1 Adv.] and Calvin [l. de Scandalis] themſelves complain. Dr. Briſtow obſerves, [Motive 47.] that it was not only the obſervation of Eraſmus, but alſo the common remark of every one in England, that as men ſhook off the yoke of confeſſion by joining the reformers, they became notoriouſly more looſe in their morals. Hence the virtuous were ſtrangely diſturbed and afflicted in mind to ſee ignorance, ſloth in virtue, and barefaced immorality, reign in ſo horrible a manner, as is teſtified by other faithful contemporary writers, [Diar. Coll. Duac. T. 2. p. 19.] The chief ſource of theſe diſorders was, the want of confeſſion. This the French Calviniſts ſolemnly acknowledged when ſeveral cities of them petitioned their leaders that it might be reſtored, at leaſt by a human law, for the public ſafety and benefit, alleging that ſince it had been aboliſhed, probity, mutual confidence, and reſtitution for injuſtices committed, were ſcarce any longer to be heard of. This is related by Sainte Marthe [Tr. on confeſſion,] and by Bourdaloe [Sermon on the 13th Sunday after Pentecoſt.] The Lutherans in Germany confeſſed the ſame in the moſt public manner. The famous Dominic Soto, the learned divine, was witneſs to this whilſt at the imperial court in Germany, in quality of confeſſarius to the emperor Charles V. Thus he writes in his comments on the fourth book of the Maſter of Sentences [in 4. diſt. 18. qu. 1. art. 1.] 'They declared this publicly in my preſence. Upon this account the illuſtrious city of Nuremberg ſent an embaſſy to Cæſar, requeſting that auricular confeſſion might be eſtabliſhed among them by an imperial law; ſaying they had learned by experience, that ſince it had been laid aſide by them, their commonwealth was over-run with ſins againſt juſtice and other virtues, heretofore unknown in their country. The petition only moved the court to laughter, as if an imperial law could compel men to the confeſſion of the ſecrets of their conſciences.' The very Mahometans have learned by experience in their Chriſtian ſlaves that nothing is a ſtronger check to ſloth, diſhoneſty, and every vice, than frequent confeſſion. A late ingenious Proteſtant author gives the following teſtimony, extracted from, 'A compleat hiſtory of the piratical ſtates of Barbary, viz. Algiers, Tunis, Tripoly, and Morocco. By a gentleman who reſided there many years in a public character.

character. Printed in London, 1750. 'The Algerines prefer ſlaves of the Roman Catholic religion to any other, believing that auricular confeſſion tends to make them more honeſt and obedient; for which reaſon the maſters are for having them confeſs weekly. Several even inform the confeſſors of any miſbehaviour of their ſlaves, and ſee them brought to the churches at Chriſtmas, Eaſter, and Whitſunday, making a ſhort enquiry afterwards if they have been confeſſed.'

On the ſtory of Cæcilianus whilſt only the Deacon at Carthage, reprimanding the Lady Lucilla for kiſſing the bone of a pretended Martyr before ſhe received the Euchariſt, Mr. Bower cries out, p. 89: 'An undeniable proof that the worſhip of reliques was at that time diſapproved by the church.' He calls it the relique of a Martyr. His author St. Optatus, b. 1. n. 16, does not ſay of a Martyr, but, 'of I know not who, if it was of a Martyr;' and again, 'The bone of I know not what dead man, and if it was of a Martyr, at leaſt it was of one not yet declared and approved. Os neſcio cujus hominis mortui, et ſi Martyris, ſed necdum vindicati, p. 17.' The learned Proteſtant Cauſabon, in his notes on this place, takes notice with Baronius, that it was then forbid for any to regard as reliques the bones of any Martyr unleſs he was declared and approved ſuch by the Biſhop, quoting for the reaſon the teſtimony of St. Auguſtine, who [l. de Opere Monach. c. 28.] ſays: 'Some vagabonds ſhew the members of Martyrs, if they were of Martyrs.' This precaution therefore was neceſſary to prevent cheats and ſuperſtition. Albaſpinæus, in his note on Optatus, takes notice that the Prieſt before diſtributing the communion, in the name of all the congregation, kiſſed the altar for the ſake of the reliques contained in it. This lady would kiſs her private reliques not approved: and therefore ſhe was reprimanded. St. Optatus would not have always added, that it was not a declared Martyr, had not this been the reaſon of the rebuke. The paſſage is a clear proof of the veneration of reliques, which Dr. Middleton will teach our author to have been then the unanimous doctrine and practice of thoſe ages, from St. Auguſtine, St. Jerome, St. Paulinus, and even from the martyrdom of St. Polycarp. In the ſame age Paula and Euſtochium wrote thus to Marcella: 'We venerate every where the ſepulchres of the Martyrs, and applying the ſacred duſt to our eyes, we touch it, if poſſible, with our mouth.' Our author pleaſes himſelf wonderfully

derfully with frequent jeers about the reliques of Saints, which he pretends not to be genuine. But theſe would arraign only the diligence and prudence of certain particulars if they were true; and no ways affect the doctrine of the church. The canons of councils, and the ſevere precautions of the paſtors in this particular, are their juſtification. If the ſame relique be thought to be in different places, the one may be the relique of ſome other Saint, and probably of the ſame name. If it ſhould happen to be not a true relique, the devotion is the ſame to God and to his Saint to whom it is referred. To excuſe ſuch a veneration from ſuperſtition or raſhneſs, a prudent aſſurance that it is a genuine relique, is ſufficient. Where a perſon proceeds upon ſuch grounds he has no reaſon to entertain any farther ſcruple. If a perſon ſhould take off his hat at a wrong chair, or to an other perſon inſtead of his lord or the king, would not his honour be equally agreeable to him for whom it was intended? Would Mr Bower condemn a clergyman who rebaptiſed a perſon that had before received that ſacrament, but whom he judged, upon prudent grounds, to have never been baptiſed? In the cruſades many reliques were brought into Europe from the churches of the Eaſt. If a miſtake ſometimes happened on ſuch an occaſion in the bare name, would the conſequence be of ſo great importance? The people may have prudent grounds and ſufficient evidence for their opinion and practice. But the hiſtorian ſometimes imagines that he diſproves the very exiſtence of ſome Saints named in our martyrologies. His triumphs are very idle. If he finds ſome circumſtances or ſtories in their lives which are looked upon by Catholic critics as doubtful or falſe, this no ways amounts to what he pretends. The names of thoſe very Saints and their martyrdom, are atteſted in moſt authentic monuments, and in a well grounded tradition of ſeveral churches. To avoid his uſual equivocation, I mean by tradition, not that which is apoſtolic or of doctrine, but that of facts; but which when well grounded, and of ſeveral united channels, forms a competent evidence. We have extant ſome very ancient martyrologies, as that called the calendar of Liberius or of Damaſus, the firſt part of which ſeems to have been written under pope Pontian, the reſt under the emperor Conſtantius, immediately after the general perſecutions: alſo that of Carthage of the fifth age publiſhed by Mabillon, and again by his diſciple Ruinart: ſeveral in the Bollandiſts, &c. With what extreme care the Biſhops

cauſed

cauſed the names of the Martyrs, the days of their triumphs, &c. to be marked in public regiſters, appears from the life of Pope Fabian in Mr. Bower himſelf. St. Cyprian is witneſs (ep. 37.) with what exactitude this was done at Carthage, even as to thoſe who died in priſon. I ſpeak not of private modern martyrologies, as that of Wandalbert; but of ſuch as are ancient and authentic, or others taken from them: than which no monuments can be more authentic. If any private perſon or particular church has been deceived, as ſome in Spain were once by the calender of the Priſcillaniſts; the miſtake was ſoon diſcovered. After all, the miſtake of a relique, through ſimplicity, not by negligence or obſtinacy, may be very innocent and without any ſin, as that of an illiterate perſon in the church of England, who ſhould take the doxology added to the Lord's Prayer in his teſtament, (which all agree to have crept from the margin into the text) for a part of the holy ſcripture. And this latter I preſume to be a very common caſe: yet a falſification of the word of God is a point of greater importance than the other. However, it behoves all the paſtors to prevent the danger of any abuſes or raſh credulity. Should any particular Biſhop be wanting herein, or even be guilty himſelf of any weakneſs or negligence, the church can no ways be charged with it: much leſs can its faith be accountable. Particular facts are no ways the objects of faith or revelation, unleſs they are contained in the holy ſcriptures. They are to be diſcuſſed by their natural evidence and proofs, and by the rules of prudence. All precautions to aſcertain particular reliques are to be uſed: but if any reliques eſteemed by ſome genuine, ſhould not be ſo, the object of their devotion is God and his Saint. It is not therefore vain, if it be not raſh and ſuperſtitious. Could our hiſtorian diſprove ſome particular relique which is eſteemed by ſome true and authentic (which I have not found) this would be nothing to the doctrine of the church. If he could make any new diſcoveries in hiſtorical facts, or detect any miſtake in them, eſpecially relating to miracles, reliques or ſaints; Grotius informs him (l. de Antichr.) and the experience of the learned critics among the Catholics ſhews by ocular demonſtration, that he could not wiſh for greater encouragement than he will be ſure to receive from the Pope and all other zealous paſtors in the Catholic church: the canons and pontifical decrees very much recommend and command ſuch a diligence.

In reading this author one would think that he had declared war againſt the moſt holy Fathers, eſpecially thoſe who have been Biſhops of Rome. Their edifying virtues he either omits or poiſons: but as the fly dwells only on ſores and corruption, if he can diſcover any imaginary failings in their actions, this is what he picks out and exaggerates, forgetting all their virtues. Nay, he generally corrupts their heroic virtues by falſe motives, the moſt repugnant to their character and ſpirit. He rakes in all the ſinks and jakes of ſchiſmatics, angry party-writers, and heathens, and where he can find any ſlander trumped up by them, this he confidently advances as undeniable truth, uſhered in under the name of contempory writers, &c. &c. It is pleaſant to ſee the good pope Damaſus charged with the murders committed by the mob in the ſchiſm, though St. Jerome and other eye-witneſſes expreſsly juſtify him. But ſtill more, to ſee this pope arraigned of avarice, love of pomp and parade, and pride, becauſe St. Jerome inveighed againſt thoſe vices in ſome of the Roman clergy. But would he have ſerved Damaſus in his own court, would he have extolled his virtue, as he did, and would this pope himſelf have been his conſtant friend, patron, and protector, if he had been the ſubject of his keeneſt ſatires? The law of Valentinian to repreſs thoſe vices is alſo alleged to involve Damaſus in them, though he was the perſon who put the law in execution, and probably who procured it, perhaps through the inſtigation of St. Jerome; for all circumſtances favour that conjecture. Ammianus Marcellinus to be ſure could not be forgotten, where he ſarcaſtically takes notice of the riches of the See of Rome in that age. The popes then enjoyed a ſtate and pomp. But ſaints did this not by choice, but by neceſſity, with as great humility as St. Polycarp received greater offices of charity and veneration from the Chriſtians. Damaſus is not accuſed by any ancient writer. The teſtimonies which all give to his ſanctity, and the very character of St. Jerome his great counſellor, ought to perſuade us that he was an enemy to every thing that ſavoured of vanity. After all, notwithſtanding the authority of Ammianus, it is certainly unjuſt to condemn in any one the mere poſſeſſion of riches juſtly acquired, for good purpoſes, and not ſought. It is the love of them, or the abuſe, which is ſcandalous and criminal: in which we are not raſhly to cenſure others. Wickliff indeed would have all biſhops to live as poor as the apoſtles were, and affirmed dominion even in ſecular princes and

others

others to be founded in grace. Mr. Bower is certainly far enough from approving ſuch paradoxes. The mammon of this world brings incentives to the paſſions: which goſpel-maxim moved this gentleman formerly to profeſs religious poverty. But he muſt have other notions of things ſince he broke through his moſt ſacred repeated vows, and thinks it better to poſſeſs a fortune than to purſue the courſe he had bound himſelf to follow to the end of his life, with the continual ſelf-denials and privations which attend it. The ſtate of riches has great dangers, as well as that of extreme worldly poverty: but it has alſo great ſpiritual advantages, and a great influence and power to do good. As to the clergy, perhaps they are often more happy before God who ſerve the church in poverty: but let them not condemn thoſe who, without their own deſire or ſeeking, are called to it with the management of a large temporal ſtewardſhip, but rather let them, if they have the bowels of true charity, pray for ſuch that they may acquit themſelves of their grievous obligations. Let them at leaſt remember the leſſon of St. Paul, Romans xiv. 3, 6, 10. Let every ſpirit praiſe God, and not judge others. The ſpirit of poverty is indeed neceſſary to virtue; but is compatible with riches, which may be poſſeſſed lawfully, and without attachment of the heart, and may be well employed. Alcuin, our great countryman, preceptor to the emperor Charlemagne, writes thus to the biſhop of Lyons: 'Elipandus objects to me my riches, ſervants, and vaſſals, which amount to the number of 20,000; not knowing that all depends on the attachment of the heart. It is one thing to poſſeſs the world, and another to be poſſeſſed by the world. Some poſſeſs riches, yet perfectly diſengaged from them in their hearts; others enjoy none, yet love and deſire them.' But whole volumes might be wrote on the charitable uſes to which popes have generally applied the revenues of the church. Ammianus, the heathen hiſtoriographer of Julian the apoſtate, is the favourite author of our hiſtorian, and is extolled by him as the moſt impartial and unbiaſſed in chriſtian affairs: as if a Heathen was equally informed of the truth, or of the characters of the perſons in the church; or as if the moſt monſtrous ſlanders, falſe notions, and prejudices which the heathens diſcovered on every occaſion againſt our religion, did not demonſtrate their implacable hatred, and their inclination to calumniate, and always believe the worſt of its profeſſors. The character of St. Cyril of Alexandria has been

much injured by ſome moderns, chiefly on account of his miſunderſtanding with the governor Oreſtes. Several of them have not ſtuck to charge him with the barbarous maſſacre of the female philoſopher Hypatia. Mr. Bower could not omit ſuch an opportunity of ſlandering an eminent biſhop and ſaint, though the ſtory no ways comes within the plan of his hiſtory. [T. 1. p. 110.] Indeed Damaſcius, an obſcure heathen writer, quoted by Suidas, accuſes St. Cyril as privy to the ſedition and murder. But the teſtimony of an unknown author, and an enemy, is not to be received without proofs and vouchers. Do Porphyry and Celſus ſtick at any calumnies againſt the chriſtians? an adverſary, unleſs he be a perſon of uncommon virtue and ſagacity, eaſily picks up and improves any ſlanders which paſſion inclines him to believe. Socrates, the chief hiſtorian, from whom we receive the relation of this fact, was himſelf a declared enemy to St. Cyril on account of his favourite Novatian heretics, and would never have ſpared him in this atrocious cenſure if he could have found the leaſt colour for an accuſation. Oreſtes the governor, his inveterate antagoniſt, would have brought his crime to light, and made the whole empire ring with his cries for juſtice. Nor could the emperor have been able to ſtifle ſuch an affair, even if he had been willing to have done it: neither would prudence, policy, or juſtice have ſuffered it. Moreover, no man is to be charged with a crime, eſpecially of ſo atrocious a nature, unleſs upon convincing evidence: particularly one whom his eminent virtue, and the veneration of the whole church, put out of the reach of ſuch a ſuſpicion. The mob of Alexandria was always moſt ungovernable, and accuſtomed to ſtrange exceſſes and cruelties, as many inſtances of the ſame ages ſhew. But this tumult is ſaid to have been headed by a reader, one of the inferior clergy. Certainly the guilt of one obſcure clerk ought not to be laid to the charge of the whole body of the clergy and of the biſhop, without ſome proof that they were privy. We are to preſume all innocent who are not proved guilty. How much more perſons whoſe ſanctity and character remove them farther from ſuch a crime? The ſilence of the moſt inveterate enemies of St. Cyril acquits him. To give you a little reſpite till the next opportunity, I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER V.

On Celibacy: Faſting: Appeals to Rome: Semipelagianiſm *and* Moliniſm: *Pope* Liberius.

SIR,

TO purſue my reflections on the taſk you have enjoined me, Mr. Bower frequently expreſſes his ſpleen againſt the ſtate of virginity and the celibacy of the clergy. He does not forget the common artifice to raiſe a contempt and odium by pretending moſt of the Catholic rites to have been derived from the heathens, which is notoriouſly falſe. The moſt ordinary inſtances alleged are the uſe of lamps in churches and of incenſe. We muſt remember that God ordered lamps to burn before the Tabernacle night and day in the old law, Lev. vi. 12. xxiv. 1, 2, 3, 4. Likewiſe incenſe, Lev. xxx. 7, &c. Both are mentioned in the apoſtolic canons, [Can. 3.] framed in the three firſt ages. The devil learned them from the divine inſtitution, when he perverted them to his ſuperſtitions. Whence Tertullian calls him the ape, mimicking falſely divine rites. 'The devil, ſays he, [l. præſer. c. 30.] imitates the divine ſacraments in the myſteries of idols.' Mr. Bower endeavours in particular to repreſent vows of chaſtity as borrowed from the heathens, becauſe theſe had their Veſtals at Rome, and the Hierophantes at Athens. But ſo far was this from the truth, that nothing is more notorious than that the profeſſion of virginity was a chriſtian inſtitution, and the wonder of the pagan world, as St. Chryſoſtom ſhews [l. de Virginit.] For both barrenneſs and virginity were held in contempt among the Jews, as appears from ſcripture: and likewiſe in general among the Gentiles. So that this divine eſtabliſhment had both the prejudices and paſſions of mankind to triumph over. Chriſt undoubtedly commends the pre-eminence of a ſtate of virginity for the ſake of virtue; ſo did his apoſtles. Mat. xix. 12. 1 Cor. vii. 8, 25, 34. Rev. xiv. 4. 1 Tim. v. 12. St. Baſil [Ep. 2. ad Amphil. can. 18.] admits maids to a ſolemn profeſſion of virginity after a ſufficient trial, if they have attained the age of 16 or 17 years. St. Athanaſius ſays, [l. de Incarn. Verbi, n. 51. p. 92.] 'Chriſt perſuaded virginity ſo powerfully, that even children courageouſly profeſs that ſtate.' The firſt fathers unanimouſly extol the inviolable obligation, and the incompa-

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rable excellency, advantages and merit of holy virginity Now, how could they have all conſpired in this doctrine which they often expreſs to have been entirely new to the world, had they not learned it from the apoſtles, whoſe immediate diſciples ſome of them were? The clergy in particular have been always obliged to profeſs celibacy from the time of their receiving the order of deacon or prieſt. Perſons in the lower orders are permitted to marry. The ſubdeacons at firſt were compriſed under the lower orders: but in the ſixth age began to be added to the higher rank in orders, and to be obliged to celibacy. This change of diſcipline with regard to ſubdeacons the author frequently mentions in a manner to confound his readers, as if the law with regard to the higher clergy had been a modern inſtitute. St. Paul teſtifies that he was ſingle, 1 Cor. vii. 8. All the other apoſtles, though moſt of them were married men when called by Chriſt, from that time renounced all commerce with their wives, as St. Jerome [adv. Vigil. p. 281. and Ep. 30. p. 242.] and other fathers teſtify. Their example was imitated by their ſucceſſors. Continence was preſcribed before holy duties in the old law, Exod. xix. 15. 1 Sam. xxi. 4. Zach. vii. 4. 1 Cor. vii. 5. Pope Innocent I. [Ep. 2. ad Victricium Rotom. c. 9.] declaring that married men when raiſed to the prieſthood are obliged to live continent, adds this reaſon: 'Becauſe they are occupied in the daily miniſtry—For no day paſſes in which they do not offer the Divine Sacrifice, or baptize.' Chriſt who choſe a virgin-mother, a virgin precurſor, and a virgin for his beloved diſciple, inſpired his church to admit only virgins to ſerve his altar, and conſecrate his ſpotleſs virgin body. If any ſingular examples happened (as that of Syneſius who refuſed to promiſe to ſeparate himſelf from his wife, to avoid the epiſcopal conſecration, though he ſeems to have complied with the common rule after his ordination) they were diſpenſations in an extraordinary neceſſity of prieſts: and the inſtance will appear from all circumſtances to be an exception proving the law. Some of the Oriental churches indeed have allowed perſons already married to ſtill cohabit with their wives: but never to marry after holy orders. Not to be drawn into a controverſial diſſertation, I refer you to Mr. Woodhead—'Diſcourſe concerning celibacy of the clergy.' I cannot help taking notice that queen Elizabeth earneſtly endeavoured to retain the law of the celibacy of the clergy, and was often very angry with her miniſters of ſtate

and

and biſhops about it, as may be ſeen at length on ſeveral occaſions in Strype's life of archbiſhop Parker; alſo in his life of archbiſhop Whitgift; and in a letter of Dr. Cox biſhop of Ely, in Collier, &c. Mr. Bower writes, p. 243, that from experience 'the forced celibacy of the clergy ought to be deemed of all inſtitutions the very worſt. All ſenſible men of that church know and lament the innumerable evils which it occaſions.' I have been acquainted with innumerable perſons of the catholic church of all degrees, and in many different kingdoms: yet I never heard one either of the clergy or others ſo much as inſinuate ſuch evil conſequences of this law; and ſincerely believe they all look upon it as a moſt holy and wiſe inſtitution. After many miſtakes and falſifications, p. 292, he ſays: 'I am very confident, that of moſt perſons who debar themſelves by vow from ever marrying, we may ſay, with the eighth council of Toledo, that they had better break a vow which they had raſhly made, than fill up, by obſerving it, the meaſure of their ſins.' Nothing like this forged quotation is to be found in that council, which it coſt me a journey to conſult in Labbe's edition [T. 6. p. 409.] It is well known that it was moſt remarkably ſevere againſt that crime, on which the learned cardinal D'Aguirre publiſhed his rigorous diſſertations to inforce the canon, by which any one who had violated this vow even in thought only, was for ever irregular, and baniſhed from the holy altar. So far was this council from authoriſing in any a violation of this vow, that it exceedingly exaggerates that crime, 'contrary to the holy ſcriptures, and to the laws of the fathers,' and commands all to be compelled to obſerve it faithfully; adding, that 'the more obſtinate and inveterate any caſe is, the more auſtere muſt be the remedies and laws to extirpate it.' We may ſay of many who by unhappy marriages live in habits of antipathies, diſſentions or other crimes, that it would be better if they had never been married. Yet their bond ſtands firm, and they are bound not to break it, but to overcome their paſſions. Mr. Bower advances that moſt perſons who debar themſelves from marriage, live incontinently. On the contrary, I can affirm from a very extenſive experience, and a perfect knowledge of many ſeminaries and religious houſes of different countries and of both ſexes, that thoſe who embrace that ſtate for the ſake of virtue, are uſually very careful faithfully to ſerve God in perfect purity of mind and body, which they keep without ſtain.

If

If any one ſhould ſacrilegiouſly violate his vow by any thought contrary to it; for one ſuch, many make marriage an occaſion of ſins various ways. Marriage is certainly a holy ſtate, and the general ſtate of mankind. Yet for one who miſcarries in the choice of a ſtate of virginity, how many hundreds miſcarry by their raſhneſs in marriage? In it how many live in ignorance, or in an habitual neglect of ſeveral indiſpenſible obligations which attend it? or in diſſentions, jealouſies, &c. nay, ſome have found in marriage the firſt ſhipwreck of their chaſtity. But the crimes of particulars cannot deſtroy the obligations or ſanctity of the ſtate. And to prevent and reform abuſes in every ſtate is the part of an holy zeal.

Mr. Bower is not aſhamed to ſuggeſt a means to keep prieſts out of proteſtant kingdoms, which modeſty ſhould have forbid him to entertain the thought of, and which he ſays, p. 243, deters them more than the fear of death. If in the primitive perſecutions, virgins were not affrighted from their duty by the public ſtews, more terrible to them than any torments and death, as Tertullian and other fathers ſay; neither would this impious project, deter zealous men, how much ſoever it ſurpaſſes all the inventions of Nero or Dioclefian: and which he who perpetually pretends a ſpirit of moderation, and ſtyles himſelf an enemy to all perſecution, does not ſtick to ſuggeſt.

He acknowledges, p. 321. that 'Friday was, from the earlieſt times, a faſt-day with all churches, both in the Eaſt and Weſt.' I ſuppoſe he allows the ſame of Lent, which the moſt venerable antient Fathers call an apoſtolic inſtitution, and which all denominations of chriſtians over the whole world moſt religiouſly obſerved till our modern reformers retrenched it. But he adds, 'Roman Catholics indulge the utmoſt riot and epicuriſm in other kinds of food, and in wine on their faſt-days,' p. 322. There are indeed tepid Catholics who ſtudy to enervate the rigor of their faſts: but even this is a ſeverity and ſelf-denial which Mr. Bower cannot brook, it ſeems. And he muſt be ſenſible how rigorous faſters the more timorous and religious are even in the preſent age. I ſuppoſe he will not deny that the devil fears, and is vanquiſhed by faſting and prayer: and that he is not ignorant of the other great advantages of a prudent mortification of the fleſh, recommended in all the parts of holy Scripture, upon which he may read many proteſtant authors, as the Whole Duty of Man, the modern ſermon of

Dr.

Dr. Weſton, biſhop of Exeter, on mortification, &c. How then can he condemn our faſts with the error of the Manichees, who pretended certain meats to be unclean of their own nature, and to be derived from their evil principle? [T. 2. p. 27.] Does not he condemn the moſt early ages of the goſpel, by his own confeſſion? nay, and the ſcriptures themſelves? for they both recommend faſting, and in the Old Law appoint the faſt of expiation every year, Lev. xvi 29. Three other yearly faſts, Zach. viii. 19. The Synagogue added every Monday and Thurſday, [as we read in Conſt. Apoſt. b. 7. c. 24.] and the devout Jews practiſed great abſtinence and faſts: witneſs the Nazarites, the Recubites, John the Baptiſt, Anne the Propheteſs, the boaſt of the proud Phariſee, &c. Witneſs St. Paul, St. Matthias, and the firſt fathers, as Clemens of Alexandria, &c. teſtify. We do not think the uſe of lawful pleaſures always criminal, or pain a virtue, as he ſays: but the revolt of our ſenſes and paſſions ſince the ſin of our firſt parents requires this remedy. They are not to be kept in ſubjection to reaſon and virtue but by abſtinence and frequent denials. Since Adam ſinned by intemperance, the ſovereignty over our paſſions which we forfeited by that act, is to be recovered by temperance and mortification. By this means alſo we endeavour to render the ſufferings of Chriſt applicable to our ſouls for the entire ſatisfaction of our ſins. He ſuffered for us, and paid a ſuperabundant ſatisfaction: but would oblige us by the practice of penance to be his living copies, and to receive by this condition the fruit of his ſufferings for the expiation of our debts. Lawful comforts and pleaſures, within the bounds of temperance, may be ſanctified by a good intention; they are ſometimes neceſſary to relax the mind, and preſerve its vigour. Chriſt does not declare all pleaſure criminal: it is annexed to many actions, by the Author of nature, for good purpoſes. Nevertheleſs, he makes ſelf-denial and frequent mortification the preliminary article before he will enrol any in his divine ſervice. It is the intention and the end that make even martyrdom agreeable to God, not properly the pain. A mother cannot be ſaid to be delighted with the bitterneſs of the phyſic which ſhe gives her ſick child, but with his cure. It is the cure of our paſſions of which we are ſpiritually ſick, that pleaſes God in our mortifications.

This hiſtorian often, moſt unjuſtly, takes occaſion to accuſe Bellarmine and Baronius of wilful falſifications of Fathers,

thers, where they were manifeſtly deceived by the inaccuracy of ſome old Latin tranſlation or the like circumſtance. He himſelf affirms Rufin to have been condemned as an Origeniſt by Pope Anaſtatius; in which he miſtakes by following uncorrect copies of that Pope's epiſtle, whilſt he might have read copies which are authentic in the edition of Coutant [T. 1. p. 739.] by which it appears that Anaſtatius condemned only the errors contained in the books of Origen which Rufin had tranſlated; for he leaves the intention of the tranſlator to God. Yet no one will tax this negligence as a wilful fraud, though the author had here better editions to conſult. I know not whether the omiſſion was equally involuntary, that this Pope in the ſame epiſtle calls all the faithful, over the whole earth, his people, and parts of his body, p. 728. The author's cavils about the appeal of St. Chryſoſtom to Pope Innocent I. are eaſily anſwered; for St. Chryſoſtom ſpeaks often in the plural number; becauſe ſuch matters were determined in ſynods. Whence he wrote alſo to Venerius of Milan, and to Chromatius of Aquileia, to beg their concurrence. Our author ſhews a particular ſpleen againſt that good pope, becauſe he often repeats, eſpecially in his letter to the African council of Milevis in the cauſe of Pelagius, that "All eccleſiaſtical matters throughout the world are, by divine right, to be referred to the Apoſtolic See, before they are finally decided in the provinces;" and, "that whatever is done in places how remote ſoever, ſhould for a final concluſion, be referred to the Apoſtolic See." He commends the prelates in the ſame letter, becauſe, he ſays, "Following the ancient rule, which you know with me to have been always obſerved by the whole world, you conſult the Apoſtolic See in intricate caſes:—eſpecially when a queſtion of faith is diſcuſſed, I believe that all my brethren and fellow biſhops ought to refer to Peter, that is, the author of his name and honour, what may be uſeful to all churches over the whole world." [Innoc. ep. ad Conc. Milev. p. 896.] Aurelius, biſhop of Carthage, and the whole Council of Milevis, acknowledged this pre-eminence of the See of Rome, by begging the confirmation of their ſentence againſt Pelagius and Celeſtius, and their errors. When it arrived St. Auguſtine wrote [Serm. 131. n. 10.] 'Already the deciſions of two councils (of Carthage and Milevum) have been ſent to the Apoſtolic See: thence alſo the reſcripts are come: the cauſe is finiſhed; would to God the error may be at laſt at an end.'

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From this ſentence of St. Auguſtine, from his conduct and that of the council of Milevum, and from the double appeal of Pelagius and Celeſtius to the See of Rome, it is manifeſt that the church of Africa acknowledged and practiſed appeals to the See of Rome in diſputes concerning faith, and owned its ſupremacy. The African prelates indeed about that time, under the Popes Innocent, Zozimus, and Celeſtine, diſputed the right of appeals in perſonal cauſes, becauſe it was very difficult frequently to tranſport neceſſary witneſſes ſo far; and ſuch remote appeals, if too eaſy and frequent, might ſometimes be a bar to the ſpeedy execution of juſtice. On the other ſide, appeals and reviſions of cauſes are often neceſſary to prevent oppreſſions and injuſtices. The general council of Sardica ordered appeals to be allowed from provinces to the Roman See, which was done to declare that of St. Athanaſius juſt and legal. This council of Sardica was an appendix to that of Nice, as Natalis Alexander proves. Wherefore it is not counted diſtinct in the liſts of the general councils, and Pope Zozimus quotes it under the name of the Nicene council, not to deceive, as Mr. Bower triumphantly pretends, but becauſe it was eſteemed one council with it, or a ſupplement to it, as thoſe writers ſhew whom Mr. Bower had always before him in compiling his work. Alſo the examples of St. Athanaſius, St. Chryſoſtom, and many others, appealing to the biſhops of Rome and their council from the moſt illuſtrious Sees of the Eaſt, abundantly prove this right of appeals. We hear no more of the oppoſition of the Africans after this time: whence it appears that they muſt have acquieſced in the authority of the council of Sardica, and in the practice of other churches, when theſe arguments were ſet in their true light to them. Whilſt they carried on that diſpute, they no more denied the ſupremacy of the See of Rome, than an inferior court denies the authority of a ſuperior, by pretending a right to determine certain leſſer cauſes without allowing any appeal in them to a higher tribunal. The Africans likewiſe at the ſame time allowed and practiſed appeals in matters of faith. The manner of other appeals belongs to diſcipline, and it is to be regulated by the canons, which may vary in different ages or countries, as we ſee at preſent. Appeals are to be made ſparingly, and according to good order. The rights of particular biſhops are not to be trampled upon. The popes of Rome have often declared that it became the pre-eminence of their See above others to be religiouſly obſervant of the canons. Other

biſhops

biſhops are not their vaſſals, as this author often repeats, but their colleagues and brethren: the government of the Church is monarchical, but not a tyranny. Our author craftily argues, wherever he finds mention made of canons concerning the authority of the Holy See, as if its authority was derived from the canons of councils alone, not from divine right or inſtitution. But the canons here only inforce the divine law, and ſometimes regulate the diſcipline as to the manner or reſtrictions of perſonal appeals.

Mr. Bower, p. 350, betrays the moſt unaccountable ignorance in divinity, and that in the moſt trite and famous of the queſtions in the ſchools. He makes the Jeſuits to be Semipelagians, though he muſt know that they deny the conſequences of that hereſy; and no man is to be charged with the conſequences which others draw from his premiſſes, and which he denies. This ſubtle logician joins with the Jeſuits all the modern popes in a lump, though he knows that many of them were drawn out of the oppoſite Thomiſtic School, and always ſhewed themſelves zealous ſticklers for the doctrine of ſelf-efficacious grace, as Benedict XIII. in his own time. On the other ſide, he confounds the modern Janſeniſts, the Predeſtinarian heretics, and St. Auguſtine: that Father, indeed, he ſays, did not underſtand himſelf, 'for in one place he ſeems to condemn what he had been labouring to prove in another. Hence Julian, whoſe underſtanding was far more methodical, uſed often to quote him againſt himſelf.' Can Mr. Bower have forgot all his principles to that degree as not to know that Thomiſts and other Catholic divines who maintain the ſelf-efficaciouſneſs of grace, all deny it to be neceſſitating, which would be incompatible with the true genuine definition of free-will? which is the error of the Janſeniſts, and of the ancient Predeſtinarians, which St. Auguſtine often condemns.

The ſurpriſe of Zozimus in receiving Celeſtius to his communion, upon his confeſſion of faith, was owing to the feigned ſubmiſſion of that hereſiarch, and to the teſtimonies of ſeveral great men in his favour. But he ſoon diſcovered the double dealing of the deceitful ſerpent, and rejected him, as is demonſtrated by Natalis Alexander, Tournely, Berti, &c. St. Auguſtine has proved this in many places at length. But, ſays Mr. Bower, St. Auguſtine adds: 'But, allowing the doctrine of Pelagius and Celeſtius to have been approved by the Roman Church, all we can infer from thence is, that the Roman clergy was guilty of prevarication.' This is a glaring

a glaring falſification of that Father's words, who writes: 'If, which God forbid, it had been ſo judged in the Roman church, that their doctrine had been approved' The words 'quod abſit,' which Mr. Bower leaves out, quite change the ſenſe, and mean the caſe to have been a ſuppoſition of what even could not be preſumed to have happened. [St. Aug. l. 2. contra 2 epiſtolas Pelagianor. c. 3. n. 5. p. 434.] He makes uſe of the ſame art of Leger-de-main at every turn. He appears much elated in the affair of the ſchiſm of Antioch, in which the Pope communicated only with Paulinus; yet Flavianus held his dignity, not regarding the judgment of Pope Syricius, as he pretends, p. 262. Pope Syricius never pronounced any ſentence againſt him: the regular order of proceeding required a previous council of the province. So many were engaged on both ſides that a little toleration ſeemed prudent to the pope, to the emperor Theodoſius, and to all others. And Flavianus after the death of all his competitors, and the union of the Eaſt in his favour, was, upon his ſolemn petition by an embaſſy, acknowledged lawful biſhop by Syricius, and was afterwards much honoured by the Holy See and the whole church both living and dead. Two long invectives againſt Syricius on this account, have no other foundation but that of his peeviſhneſs againſt the See of Rome: for certainly ſuch ſtrong objections occur againſt the firſt election of Flavianus, that we cannot wonder to ſee the ſcruples of Syricius: malice can find only ambition, haughtineſs, and every vice in the actions of a pope, which the ſame pen would canonize in another perſon. The unhappy fall of Liberius is to our author ſtill a greater ſubject of triumph. But who ever looked upon Popes as impeccable? No See in the Chriſtian world can produce ſo glorious a liſt of moſt holy and illuſtrious biſhops as that of Rome. But an Alcimus has ſometimes uſurped it. If wicked men have ſometimes ſtained it, was there not a Judas among the apoſtles? did not St. Peter himſelf fall? In ſuch occaſions the providence of God appears the more remarkable in ſtill protecting his church. But Mr. Bower aſks where is then the Pope's infallibility? He always deſignedly confounds that private opinion of ſome divines with the Catholic faith. Let him confine his ſcurrility to thoſe who think the pope infallible, in which the faith of the church is not intereſted; though they will anſwer this example is nothing to the purpoſe; for no man will deny that a pope may ſin, and fall in perſecution. Nevertheleſs

vertheleſs, the love of truth obliges us to ſay, againſt this writer, that Liberius did not ſign the ſecond Arian moſt impious confeſſion of Sirmium, but the firſt, which only omitted the Catholic doctrine, and the word 'conſubſtantial,' without denying its ſenſe, as is well proved by Natalis Alexander, Ceiller, Tournely, Berti, &c. That ſuppreſſion was indeed a moſt grievous prevarication, which however Liberius ſoon repented, and retrived by his zeal againſt the weakneſs of the prelates aſſembled at Rimini, as Theodoret teſtifies.

LETTER VI.

On his hiſtory of Pope Leo I; *on reading the Scriptures*; *and confeſſion of ſins.*

SIR,

BEING heartily tired with the firſt volume, I open the ſecond with reluctance. However to add ſome reflections on this boaſted performance, I force my inclinations, but ſhall wade in great haſte through ſo much filth. The numerous liſt of moſt illuſtrious ſubſcribers in the beginning, would raiſe our expectations, had I not heard ſeveral judicious and learned men among them cenſure freely the work, and profeſs that puffs and falſe titles had deceived them. In the life of St. Sixtus III. he omits the teſtimonies of his ſupremacy, as where that Pope writes, that he is charged with the ſolicitude and care of all the churches in the world; [ep. ad epiſc. Orient. p. 1236.] and that no one can abandon the faith of the apoſtolic Roman church, in which St. Peter teaches in his ſucceſſors what he received from Chriſt, [ep. 6. p. 1260.] The French authors from whom Mr. Bower compiled his hiſtory, demonſtrate, that only ſlander ever advanced St. Sixtus to have favoured the Pelagian doctrine ſome time before his pontificate. In a long note, p. 4. he extols much certain diſcourſes yet extant of Etherius biſhop of Tyana, the moſt obſtinate defender of Neſtorius, depoſed for ſchiſm and hereſy, and baniſhed by the emperor Theodoſius. This is the great author whoſe treatiſe, he ſays, every proteſtant muſt read with pleaſure: he inſiſts, at length, on his ſophiſtical reaſonings againſt the authority of general councils: and that he recommends the reading of the holy ſcriptures. St. Chryſoſtom and other fathers recommend the ſame: but add, that they are to be read with docility, and with ſubmiſſion to the tradition of the church which received from the apoſtles, together with the divine writings,

writings, their true ſenſe and meaning. The catholic church does not lock up the ſcriptures from the laity, to whom they are daily read and explained by their paſtors, and in whoſe hands they are put in tranſlations into every language; which ſhe does not forbid, but recommends, only requiring that it be done by the advice of their paſtor or confeſſarius, that by his direction they may be guarded againſt the fatal preſumption of following interpretations of their own private ſpirit. The endleſs diſſentions of thoſe who follow that falſe rule ſuffice to juſtify this precaution. And as Mr. Bower can find no more plauſible author among all the fathers, than the moſt perverſe Neſtorian heretic, to recommend to his proteſtant reader; I recommend to him the treatiſe of the late proteſtant learned biſhop of Chicheſter, Dr. Hare, 'On the difficulties which attend the ſtudy of the ſcriptures in the way of private judgment,' in which he ſhews the abſurdity of that rule, eſpecially in the illiterate. Jurieu and Bayle have demonſtrated great learning to be required, a knowledge of languages, antient authors, fathers, &c. without which no one can be qualified to underſtand the literal ſenſe of many parts of ſcripture, ſay they: nay, Bayle advanced a greater knowledge of theſe things to be neceſſary than can fall to the ſhare of any man: which aſſertion overturns the principles of the reformed churches, and drew on the author a ſevere perſecution in Holland. The tradition of the catholic church renders every point in the holy ſcriptures eaſy and clear to the weakeſt underſtanding, and maintains our holy faith in its purity. The wiſdom and goodneſs of our divine legiſlator moved him to engage his protection for the conſervation of the holy faith which he had taught, and of the church which he had planted, to the end of the world. Whence St. Chryſoſtom obſerves [hom. 6. in Illud. Vidi Dominum. Iſa. iv. T. 6. ed: Ben: p. 122.] 'The foundations of the church are ſtronger than thoſe of the heavens. The heathen may condemn me of arrogance; but let him learn the force of truth, how it is more eaſy for the ſun to be extinguiſhed than for the church to be overcome. Who affirms this? He himſelf who founded it.' Hence reformers of manners are always to be applauded, but we can never want a reformation of faith, as Sir Thomas Moore uſed to ſay. The church has ſeen many ſuch reformers of her faith riſe up in every age ſince Chriſt; but has equally baffled their efforts, and the perſecutions of the whole world ſometimes leagued againſt her; becauſe ſhe

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is built on a firm rock, and is ſecured by the promiſes of Chriſt both againſt violence and error. All reformers, on the contrary, have nothing ſettled, but change their faith faſter than the world does faſhions. They have new creeds every year, nay every month or moon, as St. Hilary complained of the Arians. And they divide themſelves into as many religions as they have heads among them, whilſt every one ſtrains the dead letter of the ſcripture according to his fancy. John of Leyden, by reading the bible, and preaching his whims, made himſelf king of Munſter, and introduced polygamy, &c. as Sleidan relates [B. 10.] A woman in that city, by reading the book of Judith, heated her imagination to that degree as to attempt to kill the biſhop of Munſter in the midſt of his army, but periſhed herſelf. An hiſtory of the blaſphemies, extravagancies, impieties and crimes which have been preached within theſe 200 years in Europe, by men who ſet themſelves up for teachers of the goſpel, would be endleſs. Brandt, in the hiſtory of the reformation in the Low Countries, amongſt many other examples, tells us that of David of Delft who preached inceſt and polygamy, ſaid to his companion: 'Come; doſt thou ſee how men raiſe themſelves by turning new preachers? how they grow rich and powerful at an eaſy rate? We have read the bible: let us ſet up.' He did ſo, and made a great figure at Baſil till he died there. And ſuch is the diſagreement of thoſe who expound the ſcripture by the private ſpirit, that no two find the ſame ſenſe. Staphylus reckons ſeven oppoſite expoſitions of the Lutherans alone of that text, 'This is my body:' and ſays the Lutheran religion was within a few years after its birth divided into 50 ſects, [Apol. fol. 138.] The firſt Lutherans complained bitterly of ſuch numerous broods in their own bowels, 'by which the goſpel is loſt by lies and heinous errors, becauſe every one followeth his own wit: and the matter groweth daily worſe and worſe,' as Nicholas Amſdorf wrote [Publica Confeſſio, et Confutatio Swermerorum.] Luther himſelf [in Pſ. 5] ſays: 'Heretics have not been overcome by violence or craft: but by their own diſſentions. Chriſt fights againſt them by ſending upon them the ſpirit of giddineſs and diſagreement, as he did formerly on the Sichimites and builders of Babel.' The Atlas Geographus, p. 601, ſays: The ſynod of Brin in 1608, having given leave for every man to believe as God had given him knowledge, the people were divided into 14 ſects, who all rejected communion with one another: Salmon

mon confirms the ſame, and adds: 'What could be expected from this anarchy in the reformation, but the re-eſtabliſhment of popery, which accordingly happened.' [Preſent ſtate of Europe, in Bohemia, Sileſia, and Moravia, ch. 5. T. 2. p. 9.] Has not experience ſufficiently ſhewn that they who ſeparate themſelves from the church fall continually from error to error without any ſtay? having no certain grounds or bottom to fix themſelves upon, and being ready to be carried away by every wind. Thoſe who deny all baptiſm of water, thoſe who deny its validity in infants, thoſe who hold it indifferent, and thoſe who affirm it neceſſary, pretend all to find their contradictory opinions clear in the ſame letter of holy ſcripture: and ſo in the euchariſt and every other article, even in the fundamental myſteries of the Trinity and Incarnation. Biſhop Hare obſerves, in the above-mentioned treatiſe, that the ſyſtem of proteſtants, of attaining a thorough knowledge of ſcriptures in the way of private judgment, has too great difficulties. One part of thoſe ſacred books cannot be underſtood without the whole. For this not only a good ſkill in Greek and Latin, but alſo in the oriental languages, is abſolutely neceſſary, as verſions of old books cannot be entirely depended upon, eſpecially of books written in a language little underſtood, and in many parts in a ſtile extremely figurative, and thoſe figures ſuch as theſe parts of the world are wholly ſtrangers to; as well as to their cuſtoms and manners, ſtate, government, &c. He adds another reflection, that in the firſt ſix centuries, in which thoſe general councils were held in which the firſt hereſies were condemned, ſuch a method of ſtudying the ſcriptures was purſued by very few, and thoſe who followed it moſt, had often the misfortune to be intoxicated with their own ſufficiency, and by falling into errors, to hurt the church inſtead of ſerving her. It is therefore plain, goes on this Proteſtant prelate, 'that the orthodox faith does not depend upon the ſcriptures conſidered abſolutely in themſelves, but as explained by catholic tradition, handed down from one orthodox biſhop to another, whoſe buſineſs it was to keep this ſacred depoſitum pure and undefiled, and to deliver it to his ſucceſſor entire as he had received it. It was by this tradition the main articles of faith were preſerved in the church; and not from any particular ſtudy of the ſcriptures, &c.'

Some perverted the ſenſe of the Epiſtles of St. Paul whilſt he was yet living: of which St. Peter ſays: 'In which are

certain things hard to be underſtood, which the unlearned and unſtable wreſt, as they do alſo the other ſcriptures, to their own deſtruction.' 1 Peter iii. 16. The remark of St. Auguſtine is moſt juſt, where he writes: 'Hereſies have ſprung only from this, that the good ſcriptures were not underſtood well; and that which is not underſtood well in them, is raſhly and boldly maintained.' [Tr. 18. in Joan.] The preſumption of interpreting the ſcriptures by a perverſe private ſpirit has been always loudly complained of by the fathers. St. Jerome proves that no one ought to ſtudy them without a guide and maſter leſt he ſhould err; and laments that tho' no one takes upon him to exerciſe any trade without having firſt learned it, yet all preſume to underſtand the ſcriptures, which he ſhews to be in every part difficult and obſcure to weak underſtandings. [Ep. 2. ad Paulinum. ol. 103. n. 5. p. 575. ed. Ben.] St. Auguſtine after his converſion, began by the advice of St. Ambroſe, to read Iſaiah; but being deterred by the depth of his words and ſacred myſteries, deferred it till he ſhould be more verſed in the faith, and in the fathers, as he ſays (Conf. B. ix. ch. 5.) In his old age he writes, that after a long life ſpent in the unwearied ſtudy of the divine books, a man would find their myſteries ever growing upon him, and ſtill lying deeper behind, and that 'when a man hath done then he begins.' Ecclus. xiii. 6. (ep. 137. ad Volus. n. 3.) 'St. Baſil and St. Gregory Nazianzen ſtudied the divine volumes, not with preſumption in themſelves, but from the writings and authorities of the elders who were known to have received from apoſtolic ſucceſſion the rule of underſtanding them,' ſays the hiſtorian Rufinus. [Hiſt. b. xi. c. 9.]

All muſt read the ſcriptures with the moſt profound reſpect, as the word of God, and the ſacred oracles and ſources of religion 'Not one iota or point is to be paſſed over in them. All comes from the Holy Ghoſt; and there is nothing ſuperfluous,' as St. Chryſoſtom writes (hom. 36. ol. 35. in Joan. T. 8. p. 206.) Holy prayer and humility muſt prepare a ſoul for this ſtudy, as St. Auguſtine ſhews (l. 2. de Doctr. Chriſt. c. 41. & ep. 57.) Docility and ſubmiſſion are neceſſary diſpoſitions which muſt accompany it. To prevent the ſacrilegious contempt and abuſes of theſe divine writings, the popes have forbidden them to be read in vulgar languages without leave and the advice of a perſon's confeſſarius. Even where this law is in force, it is no ways a prohibition, but an order that the illiterate read it only

only with advice: for every one has free acceſs at all times to his ſpiritual director, and it coſts no more than to mention it. The paſtor indeed if the circumſtances of the perſon ſhould ſeem to require it, would ſay ſomething to inſpire him with a juſt veneration for the ſacred books, and with a ſpirit of humility and devotion in reading them. He has in his hands a treaſure for which he ought to ſell all things, a pearl above all price. Shall he treat it as a common hiſtory? Shall he read it as a romance, for mere amuſement? or ſeek in it only what may gratify his curioſity, or furniſh him an occaſion of vanity in diſplaying a vain ſcience, or merely indulging a vein of inſignificant criticiſm? Shall he unfold the oracles of Chriſt with any other view than that of ſeeking him in them? attentive to every thing but to that which alone deſerves his attention? The ingenious Mr. Benjamin Martin, in his preface to his late introduction to the Engliſh Tongue, laments and cenſures the profanation of putting this ſacred book into the hands of every bawling ſchool-miſtreſs, and of thoughtleſs children, to be torn, trampled upon, and made the early object of their averſion, by being their moſt tedious taſk, and their puniſhment. He is even inclined to aſcribe the growth of irreligion and the contempt of holy things among us to this ſource. If we are bound to honour the name of God, and all things which belong to religion, is not a reſpect due to the word of God? The Mahometans pay the higheſt reverence to their fabulous Koran, and ſhall Chriſtians be allowed to profane in the moſt ſacrilegious manner the true oracles of the living God? Where the reſpect due to theſe divine books is ſecure, the catholic church leaves them open to all. The people hear them daily read and expounded to them by their paſtors, and in good books. Even children have excellent abridgments of the ſacred hiſtory, adapted in the moſt eaſy and familiar method to their capacity, put into their hands. The divine books themſelves are open to all who underſtand Latin or any other of the learned languages in every catholic country, and every one may read them in the vulgar languages if he firſt aſk the advice of his confeſſarius, who will only inſtruct him in what ſpirit he is to read them. In ſome countries he is to aſk leave of ſome paſtor; but this is granted at leaſt upon the teſtimony that the clauſe of the aboveſaid advice of his private confeſſarius is complied with. The clergy are moſt ſeverely ordered to make the ſtudy and meditation of the holy ſcriptures their

great employment and accompliſhment. Thus the council of Cologne in 1536, under Cardinal Laurence, Legate a Latere (Tit. de clericis, c. 5.) decrees: 'The book of the law, which is the bible, is never to be laid out of their hands.' Gregory IX. in 1228, the univerſity of Paris, in 1366, Robert Groſteſte, biſhop of Lincoln, for the univerſity of Oxford, in 1240, &c. made ſtrict laws to oblige all ſtudents in divinity to read or hear daily lectures or commentaries on the holy bible. Learned profeſſors expound it in all catholic univerſities, ſeminaries, and monaſteries where ſtudents in divinity are trained up, and their numberleſs learned commentaries both moral and critical fill all the parts of Europe. The fathers employed night and day in the ſtudy and meditation of the holy ſcriptures, as appears from their lives and writings, in which they uſually quote them by memory. What pains did not Origen and St. Jerome take in the ſtudy of languages for no other purpoſe? What ſchools were erected to expound theſe ſacred books at Alexandria, Niſibis, in the monaſtery of Studius under St. Plato and St. Theodore? How do the works of St. Baſil, St. Ephrem, the incomparable St. Chryſoſtom, the Cyrils, Gregories, Bede, &c. through every age ſhew this book to have been their continual meditation? The tears and pathetic intreaties of St. Auguſtine to his biſhop Valerian, to beg a little time to ſtudy the holy ſcripture, I think, can ſcarce be read by any one, without tears. (Ep. 21. ol. 391.) This has always been the ardour of all zealous catholic paſtors, and the ſpirit of the church, expreſſed in many general and particular councils to this preſent time. The frequent repetition of the ſlander muſt excuſe to you the undeſigned length of this remark. To reſume my taſk:

In the miſunderſtanding betwixt St. Leo and St. Hilary of Arles, Mr. Bower accuſes the pope of haughtineſs, and cenſures him in the moſt bitter terms merely becauſe he was pope. We read in the holy ſcriptures of the miſunderſtanding of St. Paul with St. Peter, and again with St. Barnabas: Yet all of them were ſaints and apoſtles. Men may be deceived by miſinformations. St. Leo ſhews that his heart was incapable of rancour in the affair, by giving the moſt ample teſtimony to the ſanctity of St. Hilary after the conteſt. He ſeems at firſt not to have been acquainted with the true character of that holy man, and therefore to have proceeded with the greateſt ſeverity. But after all, the conduct of St. Hilary ſtands in need of an apology. As to the affair

affair of Chelidonius biſhop of Beſanzon, he was depoſed by St. Hilary as convicted of certain irregularities; and was reſtored by St. Leo as innocent of the ſame. We certainly have no reaſon in this to cenſure the ſentence of St. Leo, whom we cannot doubt to have had ſufficient proofs to proceed upon, or at leaſt which ſeemed to him and to his council ſuch. Hilary was preſent with Chelidonius in that council, and defended his proceedings in perſon: which ſhews that he acknowledged the ſuperior authority of Leo in that cauſe, though Mr. Bower pretends that he denied it. The author of the life of Hilary would not give us the acts of that council of St. Leo, not daring to pronounce, as he ſays, between two ſuch great men. Neither does he allege any reaſon or excuſe why Hilary had ordained a ſecond biſhop to the See of Projectus, whilſt he was living, only ſick; and he recovered. Which ſilence is a tacit accuſation that St. Hilary by a miſtaken zeal, had fallen into that irregular proceeding; which is manifeſt from St. Leo (ep. 10.) Mr. Bower accuſes St. Leo of maliciouſly repreſenting the fact: Why? becauſe he does not mention the ſickneſs of Projectus: As if this altered the canon. The fact was attended with the greateſt inconveniences that could follow in ſuch a caſe. Where then is the malice or miſrepreſentation? In St. Leo or in Mr. Bower? We have another ſpecimen in the next paſſage, where he accuſes this great pope of ſacrificing the truth to the exaltation of his See, becauſe he ſays, that 'upon appeals from Gaul, his predeceſſors had frequently reverſed or confirmed judgments given there.' But is not St. Leo's teſtimony and appeal to all men then living in a matter of public notoriety, which no man then contradicted or queſtioned, a ſufficient evidence? Nor does Mr. Bower offer to prove his groundleſs aſſertion. This whole long relation is filled with falſe gloſſes repugnant both to the character of St. Leo, and to all the circumſtances of hiſtory. The truth is, the extent of the juriſdiction of the metropolitan See of Arles was not then clear, nor was it always the ſame. Upon the conteſtations between Arles and Vienne, Pope Zozimus in his letters to the biſhops of Gaul, &c. in Baronius, (ad. an. 417.) adjudged to Arles the primacy over all the biſhops in Gaul, and declared that no biſhop ſhould go abroad out of the kingdom without the leave of the archbiſhop of Arles, and this, not merely becauſe that city was the ſeat of the prefect, which is the plea of Mr. Bower, but 'out of reſpect

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for the bleſſed Trophimus (firſt biſhop of Arles) from the fountain of whoſe preaching all the Gauls received the ſtreams of faith, as he ſays, (ſee Marca de Primat. p. 169.) The biſhops of Vienne, and Narbonne, and Proculus of Marſeilles often diſputed the primacy of Arles. It does not appear whether St. Leo annulled the ſentence of St. Hilary againſt Chelidonius ſo as to deny him to have had any juriſdiction over Beſanzon. The learned De Marca thinks he did not, becauſe reſtoring Chelidonius he added that, 'the ſentence would have ſtood firm if the things objected had been found true.' St. Leo however deprived St. Hilary of all juriſdiction over the province of Vienne for the time to come, but reſtored part of that province to his ſucceſſor. Theſe facts alone ſufficiently prove againſt Mr. Bower what St. Leo affirmed concerning the juriſdiction which the popes his predeceſſors had exerciſed in receiving appeals from Gaul. See alſo above the application made to St. Stephen for the depoſition of Marcian of Arles. However, we cannot be ſurpriſed at theſe miſrepreſentations when we read in his note, p. 21, 'I may ſafely ſay, that among the Roman Catholics, there is ſcarce one in a thouſand, who does not immediately addreſs, in his prayers, the image itſelf, which is rank idolatry.' I never ſaw or heard of one who did ſo addreſs his prayers immediately to an image. All our catechiſms, inſtructions, ſermons and books prevent ſo enormous an abuſe. But the teſtimony of Mr. Bower was wanted to make good the charge of idolatry againſt a church which, above all others, abhors that as the greateſt of crimes againſt God and religion. What can we think of one who ſticks at no ſlander? Or of a cauſe which wants ſuch a ſupport? He refers, in the ſame place, to Dr. Middleton, that the far greater part of the ceremonies uſed by the church of Rome have been borrowed of the Pagans. It has been demonſtrated againſt the Doctor, that lamps, incenſe, and other things in which he inſtances, were employed in the ſervice of God in the Moſaic law, by his expreſs order. Muſt we condemn circumciſion appointed by God among the Jews becauſe it was practiſed by the Egyptians and other Gentile nations? Certainly he will not ſay it, even though Sir John Marſham could have proved what he falſely advanced, that it was firſt in uſe among the Heathens? Muſt we reject true religion, becauſe the devil has mimicked it by falſe ſuperſtitions? The prophets of God, becauſe the devil has had his impoſtors? The ſcriptures,

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becauſe heretics have counterfeited ſome? 'The virginity of nuns is not to be contemned becauſe there were veſtal virgins,'—ſays St. Auguſtine (l. 20. contr. Fauſt. c. 21. T. 8. p. 148.) 'There is a great difference were it only in this, to whom the offering is directed.'

It would fill a volume, to examine the notorious miſrepreſentations with which the long life of St. Leo the Great is filled; I ſuppoſe by way of revenge for the teſtimonies of his tranſcendent merit, and of the ſupremacy and prerogatives of his ſee, which he received from the emperors, patriarchs and biſhops of the Eaſt, and from the general council of Chalcedon. It is very diverting that the biographer makes both Neſtorius and Eutyches agree, and orthodox in doctrine, p. 61, though they ran into errors diametrically oppoſite to each other. That the firſt general councils were aſſembled at leaſt by the conſent of the Popes, and that the Popes preſided in them, about which he fills many pages, ſee Ceiller, Orſi, &c. Our author is very ſenſible that the ſecond and fifth, both held at Conſtantinople, which wanted theſe conditions, could not on many other accounts be reputed general in their firſt meeting, but only in their confirmation by the popes and the whole church, being only councils of the Eaſt in their aſſembling. The long deſcant on the laws of emperors and councils declaring the ſupremacy of the apoſtolic ſee of Rome (were the quotations all exact) is very weak; ſeeing none of theſe exclude the divine eſtabliſhment, and many expreſs it. The doctrine of St. Leo againſt the two hereſiarchs, both for his learning, exactitude, and ſanctity, has been canonized by the council of Chalcedon, and by all ſucceeding ages. Yet Mr. Bower charges him with numberleſs groſs errors. This great Pope, in his letter to Ruſticus of Narbonne, declares that a man who has lived with a concubine may lawfully marry another woman; but no ways excuſes the crime of keeping a concubine, as one might underſtand our author, page 9. He roundly charges him with ſeveral capital errors in his letter to Nicetas of Aquileia, who had conſulted him about certain caſes which had happened among the captives, who had been led away by the Huns under Attila. [Ep. 129.] Some captives returned again, and found their wives married to other men, upon a perſuaſion that they had been killed. The pope anſwers, the wives were obliged to return to their firſt huſbands. Nicetas had added, that the firſt huſbands demanded them. Wherefore Leo adds that

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circumſtance to expreſs that their firſt marriage muſt be proved: no ways permitting them to remain with their ſecond huſbands in caſe the firſt did not claim them, as Mr. Bower pretends [P. 120.] Some out of hunger or fear had eat meats ſacrificed to idols. Theſe St. Leo orders to do penance. Our author ſays he contradicts St. Paul, who allows ſuch meats, Rom. xiv. 1 Cor. viii. St. Leo certainly allowed what St. Paul did: but when ſuch eating was required by perſecutors in hatred of the true faith, this became a profeſſion of idolatry; for it was exacted as ſuch. In like manner did Antiochus compel the Jews to eat hog's-fleſh, as a renunciation of their religion. Nicetas adds, that ſome out of fear had conſented to be re-baptiſed by the heretics. Theſe likewiſe the pope declares to be obliged to do penance. Thoſe who had been once baptiſed by heretics, he orders to be only confirmed by the invocation of the Holy Ghoſt and the impoſition of hands, that 'they may thereby receive the virtue and ſanctification of baptiſm, having received nothing of that ſacrament before, beſides the bare form.' Here Mr. Bower makes a long deſcant to prove this rank hereſy defined by Leo ex cathedra. For, ſays he, 'according to the preſent doctrine of that church, baptiſm, whether it be adminiſtered by a Catholic or a heretic, has the ſame virtue, cancels original ſin, ſanctifies: conſequently, if the church does not err, Leo did in defining the contrary, &c.' Leo evidently defined the preſent doctrine, that baptiſm given by heretics is valid, and not to be iterated: but that when received from them by the adult in mortal ſin, by wilfully conſenting to the hereſy, it does not ſanctify or give grace: which effect is however to be recovered by penance. The whole invective of the author in this place betrays a ſurpriſing ignorance, and ſomething much worſe, which I ſhould be glad if he can excuſe from being wilful.

Upon the letter of pope Leo forbidding the public confeſſion of ſecret ſins, becauſe in theſe, confeſſion made in private to a prieſt is ſufficient, Mr. Bower takes occaſion to fill many pages with a great deal of falſe reaſoning againſt the precept of confeſſing our ſins to a prieſt. He ſays, indeed: 'Private confeſſion, or confeſſion made in private to man, began in the earlieſt times, to be practiſed in the church.' For which he quotes Irenæus [l. 1. c. 9.] Tertullian [de Pœnit.] Origen [hom. 2. et 3. in Levit. Hom. 2. in Pſ. 37.] Cyprian [l. 3. ep. 8. et Serm. 5. de lapſ.]

But

But he adds that it was never thought neceſſary. He owns it mentioned, Acts xix. 18, where it is ſaid that many who had formerly been baptiſed, Τῶν Πεπιϛευκότων, and had re-lapſed to read ſuperſtitious books, being moved to penance, came confeſſing their deeds, Τὰς Πράξεις αὐτῶν: which means their ſins in detail, not in general. But he pretends that St. James, ch. v. v. 16, means confeſſion of ſins made either to prieſts or laymen. We ſay he ſpeaks of the ſame prieſts whom he had mentioned in the preceding verſes, where he mentioned Extreme-Unction. Confeſſion of ſins in particular is likewiſe ſpoke of, 1 John i. 9. See Eſtius and Calmet on that text. Our hiſtorian urges that it is good, but not commanded or neceſſary. I only obſerve that Chriſt gave to his miniſters the power of binding or looſening ſinners Mat. xvi. 19. xviii. 18. John xx. 22. which authority the fathers exceedingly extol as real, and ſurpaſſing the power of the angels, &c. See St. Chryſoſtom (l. 3. de Sacerd. c. 5. T. 1. p. 383. &c.] All the Fathers underſtand this of penance, and the abſolution of the prieſt. Now a coercive juriſdiction is null, and of no effect, unleſs it be obligatory. How can ſinners be bound by a tribunal to which they are not commanded to ſubject their cauſes? Whence St. Auguſtine writes, [Serm. 392. n. 3. p. 1504] 'Let no man ſay to himſelf, I do penance privately; I do penance with God. Therefore was it ſaid without cauſe: Whatſoever you ſhall looſen, &c. Therefore without cauſe were the keys given to the church of God.' Tertullian [de Pœnit. c. 9. 10.] St. Pacian, St. Ambroſe, &c. grievouſly complain that they who are aſhamed to confeſs their ſins, periſh by their ſhame. St. Pacian reproaches the Novatians, who denied the church to have authority to remit certain more grievous ſins, that they 'took away the plank from one periſhing.' [Ep. 1.] St. Ambroſe ſays, [l. 1. de pœnit. c. 16. T. 2.] 'If any one having ſecret ſins, yet does penance diligently for Chriſt, how does he receive pardon if the reconciliation of the church be not granted him?' To omit others: St. Leo, of whom Mr. Bower is here treating, writes, [Ep. 82. als. 91. ad Theodor. T. 1. p. 605.] 'The hope of eternal life is repaired not only by baptiſm, but alſo by the medicine of penance—the pardon of God cannot be obtained but by the ſupplications of the prieſt.' How then does Mr. Bower advance ſo confidently that auricular confeſſion was never regarded as neceſſary before

fore the council of Lateran in 1215? Do not we read in St. John Climacus? [gr. 4. n. 11.] 'without which confeſſion no one ſhall obtain pardon.' ὴς χωρις γ'δεις ἀφεσιως τευξεται. And John of Raithe, his contemporary, in his annotations, ibid. 'We are bound by the neceſſity of the divine precept to confeſs our ſins, as is manifeſt from the Apoſtolic traditions.' All the various churches and ſects of Chriſtians in the Eaſt believe confeſſion of ſins to a prieſt of neceſſity by the precept of Chriſt; though ſome of them, as the Neſtorians and Jacobites, have been ſeparated from the communion of the Latin church ever ſince the fifth or ſixth ages. Our author borrows from Calvin his falſe inferences from the fact of Nectarius aboliſhing the office of penitentiary, which had been only inſtituted upon the origin of the Novatian hereſy, as Zozomen relates [l. 7. c. 16.] who gives the reaſon, becauſe 'penitents are obliged neceſſarily to confeſs their ſins.' This penitentiary was a public cenſor to inſpect the manners of the faithful, and to ſee that the canonical penances were duly enjoined and obſerved. When Nectarius aboliſhed that office, penitents confeſſed to whom they pleaſed, and received the divine myſteries at their own diſcretion, without the curb of ſuch a cenſor; yet ſo as to be obliged to confeſs mortal ſins to ſome of the prieſts, if guilty of any. Origen clearly expreſſes that a penitent was at liberty to chooſe to whom he would make his confeſſion, [hom. 2. in Pſ. 37. n. 6. T. 2. ed: Ben: p. 688.] 'Look about diligently, ſays he, to whom you ought to confeſs your ſins.—If he ſees your diſeaſe to be ſuch that it ought to be expoſed in the public aſſembly,—this is to be done with mature deliberation, and by the counſel of a ſkilful phyſician.' Nectarius did not take down even public canonical penance; much leſs private, as is evident from St. Chryſoſtom [hom. 3. in Epheſ. et 9 et 12. in Hebr.] and St. Nilus ep. ad Chariclum.] Our hiſtorian alleges the authority of Beatus Rhenaus, who in his preface to Tertullian, on penance, ſays that ſecret confeſſion was unknown in his days. That confeſſion of ſins to the prieſt was then practiſed is moſt evident, as Mr. Bower acknowledges. Whether it was public or ſecret the thing is of no great moment as to the ſacrament, though it is certain from Origen quoted above, St. Baſil and innumerable others, that it was at leaſt often ſecret. Mr. Bower pretends that no ancient regarded penance as ſtrictly a ſacrament. But even Luther will inform him that nothing

thing is clearer in their writings. They frequently compare it with baptiſm and the Euchariſt. Thus St. Athanaſius writes [T. 2. collect. Patr. p. 103. by Montfaucon] 'As a man baptiſed by a prieſt is enlightened by the grace of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo he who confeſſes by repentance, through the prieſt, receives, by the grace of Chriſt, pardon.' Many longer clear paſſages might be added. Conſult M. Sainte Marthe, Tr. on confeſſion againſt Daille, &c. Tournely, not to mention other divines, will teach our author that a ſupplicatory form of abſolution could be employed by the church in this ſacrament no leſs than an authoritative one, and that his long argument drawn from thence is entirely foreign to the purpoſe. He quotes Gratian that many in the twelfth century thought ſinners might by contrition alone obtain pardon without confeſſion; whilſt others thought the pardon the effect of confeſſion. But the firſt opinion only diſputed that juſtification was to be aſcribed to a juſtifying contrition, which its patrons thought neceſſary before confeſſion: For Gratian uſes thoſe Words, 'Juſtification before confeſſion; in contrition not in confeſſion, &c.' and the arguments for that opinion produced by him were theirs: And this was the doctrine of ſome divines at that time. But they all agreed that there was a divine precept of confeſſing them, and of receiving abſolution: they only diſputed whether the juſtification of the ſinner was more properly to be called the effect of the contrition or of the abſolution. He urges that Gratian affirms from St. Theodore of Canterbury and the council of Challons, that the Grecians deny the neceſſity of confeſſion. He ought to have added, that the mention of the Grecians is wanting in all the manuſcript copies of St. Theodore and of that council, and is a manifeſt interpolation of ſome ignorant copier, as biſhop Uſher and Daille themſelves confeſs; yet this remark is ſuppreſſed by Mr. Bower. It is manifeſt that the Grecians maintained then, as they do now, the indiſpenſible neceſſity of confeſſion to a prieſt. See St. John Climacus above, not to add quotations of others. In the Weſt likewiſe we find this expreſsly taught by all the divines and writers of that age. Godfrey abbot of Vendome, [l. 5. Ep. 15.] refuting the error of one who advanced that only four kinds of ſins were neceſſarily to be confeſſed, writes, 'It is certain;—nothing is more certain than this, that ſins ſtand in need of confeſſion.' The learned archdeacon of Bath, Peter of Blois, teaches this in his whole book, on Sacramental Confeſſion,

ſeſſion, in the year 1180. Peter of Cells, Robert Pullus, Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, Peter of Poictiers, and the Maſter of Sentences (in 4 diſt. 17.) ſay: 'Without all doubt ſins muſt indiſpenſibly be diſcovered to the prieſt by confeſſion. 'Some few denied the neceſſity of confeſſion as ſome now deny a Divine Providence: for Pullus calls them 'too bold and preſumptuous;' Hugh, 'perverſe' Alcuin and Godfrey, 'heretics, ſectaries, overthrowers of the catholic faith, &c.' Alcuin in the 8th age thus addreſſes them [ep. 7. als. 26.] 'You deſpiſe the apoſtolic precept. Follow the ſteps of the fathers, and do not bring new ſects into the religion of the catholic faith: ſhun the venomous leaven of error, &c.' According to the expreſs words of Chriſt, ſinners remain bound, ſins are retained, that is, are not forgiven, without the miniſtry of the prieſts, joined with the ſincere repentance of the ſinner.

LETTER VII.

On Orders: The Unity of the Church: Miracles: Pope Gelaſius I, *and Communion in One Kind.*

SIR,

NOT to loſe time, ink and paper, I ſhall confine myſelf to a few ſhort animadverſions on the remaining part of the work before me. I am ſurpriſed to hear any one, eſpecially a Jeſuit, call Du Pin 'a very eminent Roman Catholic writer,' as Mr. Bower ſtyles him, p. 149. He had notoriouſly ſeparated himſelf from that faith, and was the declared adverſary and the repeated offender againſt the See of Rome, as the popes call him: and his works are cenſured and rejected by the catholics. Indeed no one can ſet any great value on them: for he was a moſt partial, haſty, careleſs writer. He had read a great deal, but digeſted it very ill, and wrote in a hurry and for bread. His works are full of blunders, always in favour of his bold and raſh aſſertions and prejudices. See the remarks of Petit-Didier on his Bibliotheque, and the more faithful and exact hiſtories of Ceiller, Orſi, &c. &c. Mr. Bower, p. 214, 215, on the ſubject of holy orders, in a long annotation, quotes Calviniſt divines, ſuch as Calvin, Rivetus, Chemnitius, &c. It perhaps would have been more to his purpoſe if he had quoted the moſt eminent divines of the church of England, of which he profeſſes himſelf a member. It is well known how zealous ſticklers moſt of theſe have been for the eſſential

tial character of holy orders, againſt the Calviniſts whom he cites. Our hiſtorian pleaſes himſelf with a great deal of falſe reaſoning on this ſubject; but he has either forgot, or has knowingly miſrepreſented the Catholic doctrine, which teaches, that though the character of holy orders be indelible, and remains notwithſtanding the perſon be depoſed or degraded, yet de loſes juriſdiction, without which many of his functions are even invalid, and the exerciſe of all functions are taken from him and forbidden him. This deſtroys all his puns, which are grounded on this falſe aſſertion: 'That a man ſhould be depoſed from his office, and yet retain all the power belonging to his office, is ſo repugnant to reaſon and common ſenſe, that it is ſurpriſing the church of Rome ſhould ever have adopted ſuch a notion.' A prieſt degraded or depoſed is reduced to the lay-communion: yet if he ſhould be reſtored to his dignity and functions, he would ſtand in need of a re-eſtabliſhment only, not of any new ordination, as I believe Mr. Bower acknowledges. He muſt therefore either deny the neceſſity of ordination to the prieſthood, or confeſs a certain indelible character in it, ſo that in this whole witty paragraph he is evidently inconſiſtent with himſelf.

Our author rejects all miracles wrought by catholic ſaints, becauſe 'none even of their miſſionaries can perform the leaſt miracle among us, though they muſt own miracles quite neceſſary here, and quite unneceſſary in their own (catholic) countries.' Page 176. We may anſwer: 'They have Moſes and the prophets.' Luke xvi. 29. They who deſire ſincerely to ſeek the truth, have ſufficient evidence: the brothers of the rich glutton who rejected ſuch, would have hardened their hearts againſt miracles wrought under their own eyes: and God denied ſuch a favour to their incredulity. The prophets did not work miracles on all occaſions or at pleaſure, but where God inſpired them. Chriſt himſelf did not perform any in his own country, Luke iv. 24. Nor would he grant that ſatisfaction to Herod, tho' that prince earneſtly requeſted it, and certainly would not have believed without it. Such are the marks of our holy faith confirmed by inconteſtable miracles, that he who refuſes now to believe when he conſiders them, is himſelf a miracle of infidelity, and fights againſt ſenſe and reaſon itſelf. God, for the manifeſtation of his glory and goodneſs, is pleaſed often to renew his wonderful works in his church, eſpecially in the firſt preaching of the goſpel to

infidel

infidel nations, as when St. Auguſtine brought it into England, when St. Francis Xavier carried it into the Indies, and ſometimes on other occaſions. Many evident miracles have been juridically proved before the moſt rigorous judges, of which a whole hiſtory might be compiled. I only refer the author for the preſent to the life of St. Tereſa, written by herſelf, and ſhould be glad to know his ſentiment of it. If he meets with the hiſtory of one impoſture, of one forged or miſtaken miracle, he triumphs as if all miracles were alike, not reflecting that lyes do not deſtroy the evidence of truth; as the forgeries or ſorceries of Apollonius Thyanæus, ſo much boaſted by Porphyry and other heathens, and by them oppoſed to the miracles of Chriſt, no ways prejudice the reality and evidence of theſe: nor the counterfeit goſpels the truth of thoſe which were penned by the apoſtles.

Mr. Bower is very angry with Pope Gelaſius I. becauſe he depoſed Acacius, Patriarch of Conſtantinople, who had abetted ſtrenuouſly the henoticon or decree of union of the emperor Zeno, in favour of the Eutychian hereſy. He dares not pretend that Acacius did not deſerve that cenſure: but will have it to have been unjuſt in the pope, becauſe the cauſe of Acacius ought to have been firſt judged in his own province, or by the oriental Biſhops. But it is notorious that many of theſe leaned towards that hereſy, and all were overawed by the emperor. Their neglect made the zeal of the Pope more neceſſary and more active. Pope Gelaſius often repeats in his letters on this occaſion, that the Roman ſee had from the beginning the care of all the churches over the world, [Ep. 6. p. 1173. T. 4. Conc.] and that from it there lies no appeal to any other church, [Ep. 4. p. 1116.] which ſupremacy he founds in the words of Chriſt to St. Peter. He ſays God has diſtinguiſhed the imperial and ſacerdotal authority, ſo that the one judges all matters of religion, the other all thoſe of ſtate, [Ep. 8. p. 1182.] This doctrine is what ſo much incenſes our hiſtorian againſt this moſt learned and moſt holy pope: but he pretends, page 233, that Gelaſius changed the language of his predeceſſors and of the church in this point, who before had built this ſupremacy upon the canons, not on the eſtabliſhment of Chriſt. But he has forgot that he himſelf had cenſured Innocent I, Leo I, &c. for the ſame thing: he might have added all the antients in the ſame category.

He ſays that Pope Gelaſius excommunicated Dioſcorus, Elurus,

Elurus, Peter Mongus, Peter Fullo, Acacius, all their ſucceſſors, accomplices, abettors, and all who communicated with them, ‘ curſing at once the better half of the church, the emperor and many perſons at this time very eminent in the Eaſt for their ſanctity; viz. St. Sabas, St. Theodoſius, St. Elias, biſhop of Jeruſalem, St. Daniel Stylites, &c. Theſe all flouriſhed at this time, had all communicated with Acacius, lived in the communion of his ſucceſſors, died out of the communion, nay, under the curſe of Rome, and yet (ſtrange inconſiſtency!) they are now honoured by her as ſaints of the firſt rate, and invoked by the ſucceſſors of thoſe by whom they were curſed.’ p. 224. But no ſuch cenſure was ever fulminated either by Felix II. or Gelaſius. Acacius himſelf was excommunicated; and the popes refuſed to ſend letters of communion to Euphemius and Macedonius, becauſe they read the name of Acacius in the Dyptics or liſt of lawful biſhops. But this interruption of communion between the ſee of Rome and the chief ſees of the Eaſt, is not to be extended to all their ſubjects, and though a mark of diſpleaſure and a puniſhment, was not a true excommunication. We have ſeen popes in our days for a ſign of diſpleaſure direct no more their briefs or commiſſions to certain biſhops, who yet were never looked upon either by the popes or any others as excommunicated, or out of the catholic church.

This interruption of communion might perhaps ſometimes be called a ſort of improper excommunication, as the excluſion of penitent ſinners from the ſacraments during the courſe of their penance was, though it had no way the effects of a true excommunication. The popes had certainly reaſon to inſiſt on the expunction of the name of Acacius, to exclude the ſecret evaſions of the heretics who gloried in him. Whether any of the Greeks incurred the guilt of ſchiſm, by any unwarrantable meaſures in favour of Acacius or the heretics, God is judge: we do not find any of them excommunicated by the popes, though theſe omitted the uſual tokens of communion with them as a mark of diſpleaſure. The difficulties, eſpecially the ſcandal of the weak, feared from the expunging of a name dear to many, might be believed by many *bonâ fide*, to excuſe their conduct by the neceſſity of circumſtances, and a moral impoſſibility of obeying till matters in the Eaſt ſhould grow more calm. Euphemius and Macedonius were zealous confeſſors, and ſuffered much from the Eutychians;

and

and hiſtorians bear teſtimony to the ſingular piety, eſpecially of Macedonius. The learned Dominican Natalis Alexander maintains that they were never ſchiſmatics. The Bollandiſts prove the ſame by the example of St. Flavian of Antioch, and St Elias of Jeruſalem, who have been always honoured among the ſaints even in the Weſt, yet both did not for ſome time enjoy certain exterior tokens of the communion of the ſee of Rome. The Greek church honours only Euphemius on the 25th of April, and the continuators of Bollandus have inſerted his life: but neither of them is named in the Roman martyrology. Not one of theſe mentioned by Mr. Bower died under any excommunication. Could material ſchiſm be proved upon any of theſe, which cannot be done, this would ſhew no inconſiſtency in the conduct of the church. No guilt is incurred, no crime of hereſy or ſchiſm committed, by thoſe who err without obſtinacy, and invincibly. No man can ſin without a fault, and invincible ignorance exempts perſons from fault. They therefore who err by this ignorance only, and for want of knowing the truth, which they ſincerely deſire, and are ready to embrace if they knew it, can neither be heretics nor ſchiſmatics before God: they may be in the true church of Chriſt by deſire, and may be ſaved through his grace, and by faith in him; as many illiterate perſons who live in the communion of the church, may frame to themſelves ſome erroneous notion concerning a remote point of faith, which does not deſtroy the ſincerity of their faith in Chriſt, as long as it is inculpable by being invincible, and they are diſpoſed and ready to correct it. Catholics therefore teach without any contradiction, that many in ſchiſms or errors in which they were brought up, may be excuſed from the guilt of that crime or of hereſy, being called material heretics, or erring without malice or obſtinacy. Hence the preſent learned * pope, in his great work on the canonization of ſaints, writes, [Vol. 3. b. 3. c. 20. N. 6. p. 282.] 'As a material heretic, ſo a material ſchiſmatic may be a martyr.' Three examples ſeem to confirm this aſſertion. Peter of Luxemburgh, (who died in the great ſchiſm at Avignon) and Lewis Alamand, were beatified by the true Pope Clement VII. The latter conſecrated the anti-pope Felix in the council of Baſil; but afterwards did penance for that fact. Alſo Paſchaſius, deacon of Rome, mentioned in the Martyrology May xxxi, adhered to his death to Laurence againſt pope Symmachus, as St. Gregory relates

[* *Benedict* xiv.] [Dial.

[Dial. l. 4. c. 40, 41.] Hence he muſt have died whilſt the controverſy was ſtill ſubſiſting. "Sicut materialis Hereticus Martyr eſſe poteſt, ita et materialis Schiſmaticus, &c." No father ever wrote more ſtrenuouſly for the unity of the catholic church than St. Auguſtine, who yet in his letter to Glorius, Eleuſius, and other Donatiſt biſhops, ſtyles them 'Moſt Beloved Lords and Venerable Brethren;' adding the reaſon, becauſe 'They who defend their opinion, though falſe and perverſe, yet with no obſtinate malice, eſpecially when they had received it from their parents, and diligently ſeek the truth, ready to be corrected when they have found it, are no ways to be reckoned among the heretics. "Nequaquam ſunt inter hæreticos deputandi" 'If I did not think you ſuch, perhaps I ſhould not write to you at all.' [Ep. 43, olim 162. T. 2. p. 88.] Whence he does not addreſs this letter to thoſe chief biſhops of the ſect who had ſufficiently diſcovered their obſtinacy, by reſiſting the truth manifeſted to them. Nor were thoſe to be excuſed from hereſy, as he mentions in another epiſtle, who neglected to examine the truth with all poſſible diligence when an opportunity was offered them, or who remained in error or ignorance out of ſloth, or human reſpects, for fear of the world or of diſpleaſing their friends, or out of pride, preſumption, obſtinacy, cuſtom, intereſt or other temporal motives or paſſions. But as for thoſe whoſe errors conſiſt in more remote articles, and who did not themſelves break off from, or reſiſt obſtinately, or neglect the means of arriving at, the truth, if they are ſincere and diligent, 'They are by no means to be reckoned among the heretics.' This is doubtleſs the caſe of many among the Greeks, Muſcovites, &c. Such if exact in prayer, and all other duties, may by the ſacraments or perfect contrition obtain the pardon of ſins, and life everlaſting through Chriſt, and are in the church in deſire, though they do not enjoy the benefit of its exterior communion through an invincible ignorance, by which it is rendered impoſſible to them.

This rule is not to be extended to infidels who do not know, believe in, and worſhip, the true God, and Chriſt his Son and our Redeemer. 'Without Faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.' Hebr. xi. 6. Eternal life requires that we know God, and Chriſt made man to redeem us. John xvii. 3. There is no other name in which men can be ſaved. Acts iv. 12. 'He who doth not believe is already judged,' John iii. 18. &c. The abſolute neceſſity of be-

lieving, by a ſupernatural faith, God the Creator of all things, and our ſupernatural rewarder; alſo Jeſus Chriſt his Son our Redeemer, is an article which has been always allowed to lie at the very foundation of the Chriſtian religion. Whence Dr. Potter, then biſhop of Oxford, in his charge to his clergy, expreſſed how much he was ſhocked to read ſuch principles of ſincerity laid down by Dr. H——y, which would allow ſalvation to Mahometans.

The patriarchal revelation which taught a ſupernatural faith of God our laſt end and ſupernatural rewarder, and of a redeemer from ſin then to come, ſubſiſted alone till the more explicit Moſaic diſpenſation given to the Jews whom God made his peculiar people, when idolatry ſeemed otherwiſe to threaten to baniſh the knowledge of his true worſhip out of the whole world. This patriarchal revelation ſufficed to conduct ſouls to God, through Chriſt then to come; and this even after the law was given to the Jews, where men who did not belong to that covenant, and were not of the poſterity of Iſrael, had not effaced or adulterated this primitive faith by idolatry, ſuperſtition or ignorance. Melchiſedech ſerved the true God, though not of the family of Abraham. Job, and doubtleſs innumerable others, were ſaints, who were no Jews. St. Auguſtine and other fathers call theſe, in a certain ſenſe, Chriſtians before Chriſt, becauſe they believed, at leaſt in ſome manner, a redemption to come, which we believe accompliſhed: they were ſaved by the grace of Chriſt, and they belonged to that myſtical body of the church of which we are alſo members, and of which Chriſt is the head.

It ſeems from Rom. i. 21, and from the teſtimonies of prophane hiſtory, that we have no great grounds to hope that any of the known Grecian philoſophers had this happineſs of faithfully worſhipping the true God, whom ſeveral of them knew. However St. Juſtin preſumes it of ſome, in that paſſage on which Mr. Jortin and the modern latitudinarians lay great ſtreſs. Speaking of the ancient philoſophers he writes: ‘ They who lived according to reaſon are Chriſtians, howſoever they were called Atheiſts. Such were among the Greeks, Socrates, Heraclitus, and others: among the barbarians, Abraham, Elias, &c.’ [Dial. p. 153.] But biſhop Mountague [Orig. Eccl. Appar. 1. p. 21.] and other former pillars of the proteſtant church have anſwered for me, that this father no way favours the latitudinarian principle of allowing ſalvation to infidels; for he

he preſumes that thoſe philoſophers who were called atheiſts by their idolatrous countrymen, and Socrates who was put to death on that account, worſhipped the true God as Job did. Otherwiſe he could not have called them Chriſtians in any ſenſe, and have ſaid that they lived according to reaſon. B. Mountague thinks that he perhaps leaned to the Pelagian error which had not then been condemned by the church. But no word which he uſes, excludes ſupernatural grace and faith; and the name of Chriſtian muſt imply a faith in a Redeemer to come. To allow ſalvation to infidels who have no ſupernatural faith even of theſe fundamental myſteries, is to overturn all the principles of our divine religion. On the other ſide it is clear, that the ignorance of a revealed religion or of faith may be invincible in ſome to whom it has never been preached or propoſed. And it is an error, condemned by the catholic church, to affirm that infidelity which is merely negative or invincible, is itſelf a ſin. No perſon can be damned for it, but for idolatry which is an inexcuſable crime againſt the light of nature and reaſon, or for other ſins. If invincible infidelity is not a ſin, much leſs is an invincible error in ſome ſingle article the crime of hereſy, which is defined 'A wilful and obſtinate error in matters of faith.' Whence that maxim of a true ſon of the church: 'I may err, but I will never be an heretic.'

Mr. Bower thinks theſe principles inconſiſtent with the catholic doctrine concerning the unity of the church, out of which there is no ſalvation: which point proteſtants uſually cenſure as injurious to charity. Yet nothing ought to be more inconteſtable in the Chriſtian religion. The thing ſpeaks of itſelf. Had there been more Gods and Chriſts than one, we might have had different religions: but it is a ſelf evident truth that as there is only one God, and only one Chriſt, he can have only delivered one faith, not contradictions. Truth in every point is but one, and this alone, can be delivered by him. 'One Lord, one faith, one baptiſm.' Epheſ. iv. 5. You have read or may read Bp. Pearſon on the Creed, art. 9. I believe no man will deny that it muſt always be a grievous ſin obſtinately to refuſe to embrace the will of God, and aſſent to truths revealed by him, and duly propoſed to us. For this is an henious affront offered to God, and conſtitutes the malice of the ſin of hereſy, which according to St. Paul, Gal. v. 20. Tit. iii. 5, 10, 11, &c. damns ſouls. It is moreover manifeſt, that

Chriſt eſtabliſhed only one church, of which all men are obliged to make themſelves members when it is manifeſted to them. Out of its pale no one can be ſaved, as no one eſcaped the deluge who was out of the ark of Noah, according to the expreſſion of St. Cyprian and other fathers, repeated by Dr. Pearſon on the Creed. In this even the firſt reformers agreed. Mr. Thorndike, a proteſtant divine, writes: 'Until the dregs of our times, I do not know that it was ever diſputed, that Chriſtians are not bound to be members of one and the ſame viſible church.' (Juſt Weights and Meaſures, ch. 6.]

The church always exacted creeds or profeſſions of faith from thoſe who were baptiſed or admitted to her communion. She always excommunicated heretics who adulterated her faith in any article, and ſchiſmatics who, on any pretext whatever, ſet up altar againſt altar, or rebelled againſt church-governors. She always taught the neceſſity of the ſtricteſt unity in faith and communion, as her councils and writers in every age ſhew. Read St. Auguſtine and St. Cyprian, on the unity of the church, and in their epiſtles, &c. This ſeems to be a point that was never called in queſtion before the laſt century. The authors of the different ſects of proteſtants generally agreed in it, at leaſt if we except Zuinglius, who yet evidently excluded from ſalvation the Antitrinitarians, &c. and the Zuinglian magiſtrates of Zurich condemned all Anabaptiſts to be put to death; as Eraſmus complains, by a contradiction to their own principles. See Brandt, in the hiſtory of the reformation in the Low-Countries. The anathemas, and dreadful thundering curſes of Luther againſt the Zuinglian, Calviniſts, &c. are well known. A liſt of the virulent books in which they excommunicated and condemned each other may be ſeen in Brerelie's apology. They all agreed in the neceſſity of one viſible church to ſalvation. See Charity and Truth, P. 30, 31, 32. Frederick Staphylus, who from a diſciple of Luther became a catholic, and was made counſellor to the Emperor Ferdinand, in his apology, p. 58, relates that a young man of his acquaintance, who had been a preacher in Miſnia according to the principles of Melancton, maintaining good works and eccleſiaſtical conſtitutions to be things indifferent, went into Saxony to Illyricus, another diſciple of Luther, who becauſe he would not ſay that good works are pernicious to ſalvation, called him a Mamaluke, and an apoſtate heretic, and expelled

pelled him the country. He therefore repaired to Oſiander, another ſcholar of Luther in Pruſſia, who aſked him whether he believed a man to be juſtified by the eſſential juſtice of God, and regarded all that denied this as heretics? and when he anſwered that he could not aſſent to ſuch an article, he was drove out of the dominions of Pruſſia as an heretic. He addreſſed himſelf to the Calviniſts in Poland; next to the Picards; afterwards to a Sileſian nobleman, to whom he anſwered that the doctrine of Swencfield, that the external miniſtry or preaching is ſuperfluous, and that the internal word, or rather operation of the word when preached, is the Son of God himſelf, was an exploded hereſy. Then he went to the Anabaptiſts in Moravia: but met with the ſame treatment every where. Seeing himſelf condemned by all the other reformers as an heretic for maintaining the doctrine of Melancton, he laſtly went to Vienna, and embraced the catholic faith. Salmon mentions, in his modern hiſtory of Germany, (ch. 7. p. 62. T. 2.) that the Lutherans, to ſhew their inſuperable averſion to the Calviniſts, in the great church at Leipſic, have drawn the pictures of the devil, Ignatius of Loyola, and John Calvin, and hung them up in one frame, with this inſcription: 'The three great enemies of Chriſt and of the Chriſtian religion.' Nor are the Calviniſts at all behind-hand with them. It is a point publicly notorious, that all the firſt reformers, were they now living, would condemn their followers as rank heretics. A particular detail would be ſuperfluous and tedious. To point out one inſtance: it is well known how warmly both Luther and Calvin made predeſtinatianiſm a capital point: yet from Melancton the Lutherans have exploded that, and even adopted the contrary error of Pelagianiſm. When Arminius endeavoured to introduce the ſame change of doctrine among the Calviniſts, theſe in the council of Dort condemned and baniſhed all his adherents. To which council King James I. ſent word, that if they forſook the principles of the firſt reformers, he would exchange his friendſhip into eternal hatred. Notwithſtanding this we ſee that the learned Calviniſts have now almoſt univerſally (except at Geneva) abandoned the Predeſtinarians to run into the oppoſite Pelagian doctrine, as biſhop Burnet himſelf obſerves (on the 39 Articles.) The like might be ſhewn through innumerable other principal articles. Mr. Chillingworth by his book entitled, 'The religion of Proteſtants a ſafe way,' chiefly contributed

buted to promote the modern paradox in Chriſtianity, that ſo many different religions and communions are each a ſafe way. Dr. H----y, and Mr. de la Pilloniere, the apoſtate French Jeſuit, in their letters to Mr. Snape, ſhew Mr. Chillingworth to have been a Latitudinarian, and to have refuſed to ſubſcribe to the confeſſion of faith of the church of England, becauſe he did not approve the Athanaſian creed, and had, as he ſaid, true charity for all Chriſtian ſocieties. Cheynel, a Preſbyterian miniſter, publiſhed a book, now very ſcarce, called Chillingworth's Noviſſima, in which we find that Cheynel met Chillingworth dying, at Chicheſter, where he had been a priſoner for the king's cauſe. He calls it his chief hereſy, that he oppoſed reaſon to faith, and repreſents him as one who had reaſoned himſelf out of his ſenſes. He preſſed him to anſwer, whether one who died a Turk, Papiſt, or Socinian, could be ſaved? The ſick man replied that he would neither abſolve nor condemn ſuch a one. Cheynel was much ſcandalized, and ſharply reproached him. The other begged he would treat him with charity, becauſe he had been always charitable, and deſired his prayers. The miniſter prayed only for his converſion. When Chillingworth was dead, he refuſed for ſome time to bury him; but at laſt ſuffered him to be interred in the old cloiſter with the monks of whom he had ſo good an opinion. But threw his famous book, 'The religion of proteſtants a ſafe way,' into the grave with him, ſaying: 'Go curſed book, which haſt ſeduced ſo many precious ſouls. Go with thy author, and rot with him.' The ſentiments of Mr. Chillingworth ſeem now to have made wonderful progreſs, under a falſe name of univerſal charity, which ſome extend to Turks, Jews and Pagans. Would not theſe Latitudinarians applaud Hubert Dovehouſe, pariſh prieſt at Utrecht, who to conform to his flock, in which ſome were catholics, others proteſtants, profeſſed himſelf of both religions at once, and firſt ſaid Maſs to the catholics: then they going out, and the Calviniſts coming into the church, he immediately began and read to them their new liturgy. For which conduct he is commended by Brandt. Some of theſe gentlemen would perhaps approve the falſe religion of Redwald, king of the Eaſt-Saxons, who had in the ſame church or temple one altar erected to Chriſt, and for the celebation of the divine myſteries, and another leſſer, on which he offered victims to the idols of

his

his anceſtors. Their principles would allow men to ſacrifice both to the true God and to Baal, as the Chevalier Ramſay defends in expreſs terms. (1) Such extravagances overturn the very idea of all true religion, and make it a thing quite indifferent. They contradict the whole tenor of holy ſcriptures, and the conſtant doctrine and practice of all ages, and ſhake the very foundations of divine revelation. For this can never ſtand if ſuch principles be admitted, or if truth and error, religion and ſuperſtition both can pleaſe God, and conduct our ſouls to him.

The anathemas or damnatory clauſes in the Athanaſian creed offend Mr. Chillingworth and many other modern proteſtants. But Dr. Waterland, in his learned commentary on that creed obſerves, with relation to them, that they are always to be underſtood with the exception of invincible ignorance, and that no Chriſtian can doubt that he is to give an account to God of his faith no leſs than of his actions. The very nature of a divine univerſal revelation, every part of the holy bible, and the conſent of all ages, point out this principle with the utmoſt evidence. Dr. Hare, in his ſermon on Church Authority Vindicated, at London in 1719, againſt Bp. Hoadly, ſhews by the example of Hymenæus and Alexander, 1 Tim. i. 19. that heretics for points of doctrine are delivered to Satan no leſs than inceſtuous perſons and wicked livers, and that the plea of invincible ignorance can never excuſe thoſe who may by a diligent ſearch attain to the truth. (2) A pretext of ſincerity is falſe where it ariſes from ſloth, careleſſneſs, prejudices, human reſpects, pride, obſtinacy, intereſt, or ſuch like ſprings of action. Charity can no more canonize hereſy, than drunkenneſs or wilful perjury; tho' it forbids us to ſearch the hearts of others which are only known to God, to condemn a conduct or action which may be innocent before him, where our cenſure is raſh and unwarrantable. In obſcure controverſies which have been much puzzled, as in the caſe of the great ſchiſm, in which St. Peter of Luxemburgh lived, how many may be perplexed or impoſed upon by the miſrepreſentation of facts? And far from condemning, who is not edified at the ſimplicity of the poor

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(1) *The philoſophical principles of religion. By the Chev. Ramſay. Glaſgow*, 1751, 2 *Vol.* 4*to.*

(2) *Read Mr. Seed, on the damnatory clauſes of the Athanaſian creed vindicated. App. T.* 1. *p.* 117.

woman

woman whom the Marquiſs of Worceſter met in Cardiganſhire? who being above one hundred years old, had ſeen the changes of religion, and reſiſted ſolicitations and example, like old Tobie, continuing to pray alone rather than to conform. But for her Eaſter duty, being much perplexed, not thinking there was a prieſt in England, and fearing to omit ſo ſtrict an obligation, ſhe went to church and received the ſacrament, praying to God firſt, that ſince ſhe could not attain the means, he would make the parſon a prieſt to her that day: which ſhe believed his goodneſs to be ſuch, as to grant her. She had every day ſaid her office, &c. and died of joy that night becauſe the Marquiſs told her, he would carry her to Ragland caſtle where ſhe ſhould find all the means of ſerving God, &c; as we read in the Apothegms of that nobleman, [Apoth. 17.] Who could be ſo unjuſt as not to admire the miſtaken ſimplicity of this zealous old woman, which moved the Marquiſs to many tears? Doubtleſs many are led into miſtakes through miſrepreſentations, &c. without obſtinacy, hereſy or ſin. Such if they truly ſeek, and earneſtly deſire to embrace the truth, and are unfeignedly diſpoſed to renounce every thing for it, if attained, are in the true church at leaſt in deſire, *Voto*; which our divines teach to ſuffice to ſalvation, as Mr. Bower knows. Such an invincibly erroneous conſcience is ſtill a great misfortune, where it deprives a ſoul of many powerful means of virtue which the church furniſhes. Thoſe divines who think from the texts of the holy ſcripture, that ſince the coming of Chriſt, not only the articles of God as a ſupernatural rewarder and redeemer, but alſo thoſe of the Trinity and Incarnation are indiſpenſably to be believed by a diſtinct explicit faith, rank the Arians and Socinians who deny thoſe myſteries, among infidels.

To follow my author, Mr. Bower borrows from many proteſtant writers what they have endeavoured to infer from the writings of pope Gelaſius againſt communion in one kind, and againſt tranſubſtantiation, and uſhers this in with his uſual confidence and boaſt. But as to the firſt, Gelaſius only forbad communion in one kind, to aboliſh the ſacrilegious practice of the Manichees. Thoſe abominable heretics abſtained from wine as unclean, and the gall of the devil: on which account they never received the cup. This their affectation was a long time unobſerved, and they received the ſacrament from the catholic prieſts, as we learn from

from St. Leo (Serm. 4. de Quadrag. T. 1. p. 217.) in the year 443. They continued this practice till pope Gelaſius, in 496, to detect them, commanded all to receive both kinds, or to be denied both, becauſe the diviſion of the ſame myſtery is ſacrilegious. (De conſecr. diſt. 2. c. 12.) He calls it a ſacrilege when done out of diſobedience or a ſuperſtitious abhorrence, in which caſes it was an abuſe of the ſacrament. This prohibition ceaſed by diſuſe, when the Manichæan hereſy no longer made it neceſſary. This very fact undeniably proves that communion either in one or in both kinds was left before to the diſcretion of the faithful. Which likewiſe appears from Zozomen (hiſt. b. 8. c. 5. p. 764. ed: Vales.) where he relates that a Macedonian woman, who was compelled by her huſband to receive the holy Euchariſt from a Catholic Prieſt, ſecretly ſpit it into her handkerchief, and found it afterwards changed into a ſtone. Many other inſtances might be added, which prove that cuſtom then made it indifferent to receive in one or in both kinds; nay, in ſeveral caſes the communion was always given in one kind, as to the ſick at a diſtance. Serapion dying is related by St. Dionyſius of Alexandria to have received only the bread, (in Euſebius hiſt. b. 6. ch. 44.) St. Ambroſe at his death received only the bread, as Paulinus his deacon mentions. Only the wine was given to the ſick when their mouths were too dry to ſwallow any thing ſolid, as we find in the eleventh council of Toledo (Can. 11. T. 6. Conc.) Only the wine was given to infants, as is clear from St. Cyprian (l. de lapſis. p. 94.) and St. Auguſtine (ep. 98. olim 23. T. 2. p. 265. &c.) Domeſtic communion was very frequent in the primitive ages, but always in the form of bread only; as we ſee in Tertullian (l. 2. ad Uxor. c. 5.) St. Cyprian, (de lapſis) &c. The abſtemious who have a natural antipathy to wine, never receive that ſpecies; even the Calviniſts in France exempted them. See the acts of their Synods. Chriſt promiſes eternal life to thoſe that eat of the bread alone, John vi. 59. It can no more be inferred from the example of him giving the Euchariſt in both kinds to the apoſtles that he commanded it to be always received in that manner and in no other, than that he commanded it to be always received at ſupper becauſe he inſtituted it at his laſt ſupper. Both kinds are neceſſary to conſtitute it a Sacrifice, myſtically repreſenting the death of Chriſt by the ſeparation or ſpilling of his blood, ſignified by the two diſtinct ſpecies placed ſeparate:

rate: but it is a neceſſary conſequence of the doctrine of the real preſence of the body of Chriſt in its immortal ſtate in this Holy Sacrament, that under either kind Chriſt is received whole and entire: for he cannot be divided. It is the opinion of many that Chriſt gave the Communion in bread alone after his reſurrection, Luke xxiv. 39. Alſo the apoſtles, Act. xi. 42. Act. xx. 7.

Galaſius in a treatiſe on the two natures, to confute the Eutychian hereſy, employs the myſtery of the bleſſed Euchariſt, as Theodoret had done. This ſome, whom Mr. Bower copies, make an objection againſt tranſubſtantiation, though they own it a proof of the real preſence; ſo that they fall ſhort of their aim by their own confeſſion. And they miſtake the reaſoning of Gelaſius to form their objection. For the Eutychians teaching that in Chriſt there is only one nature which is the divine, concluded that he had loſt all the properties or qualities of the human nature, and was not viſible, palpable to the hands and the like. The author reaſons thus againſt them: the ſymbols or bread and wine in the Euchariſt are not made inviſible, impalpable, without figure, extenſion, or the other qualities: in like manner neither is the body of Chriſt ſo abſorpt in the divinity as to be rendered inviſible, without figure and the other qualities of a human body. He calls the exterior ſenſible qualities the nature, and in this place reaſons only about them. See Arnauld, Witaſſe, Tournely, &c. and for the doctrine of the earlier ages in that myſtery, let thoſe who ſeek the truth, read thoſe fathers who expreſsly explain it, eſpecially to the catechumens, as St. Cyril of Jeruſalem (Cat. 22 and 23. ed. Ben:) with the third diſſertation of Dom Touttée, his Benedictine Editor: alſo St. Ambroſe (l. de initiat. c. 9.) the author of the books on the ſacraments, under his name, older than Gelaſius: S. Chryſoſtom (hom. 82. olim 83. in Matt. p. 783, 787, and hom. 46. olim 45. in Joan. p. 272, &c.)

LETTER VIII.

IN a long note on John II, p. 334, he heaps many ſlanders together; as 1ſt, that the fathers thought ſecond marriages, in ſome degree, criminal: whereas they unanimouſly declare them lawful, though commonly a mark of imperfection, at leaſt in thoſe who have a family of children,

dren, whom they often neglect or injure by a ſecond venture; or when a ſecond marriage carries with it manifeſt marks of no other motive than that of paſſion or incontinency. On theſe accounts, to recommend in general a ſtate of widowhood, and to ſhow ſecond marriages to be frequently imperfections, ſome canons ſubjected them to a public penance; yet all councils and fathers declare them free from ſin in themſelves. How then can he write: 'The antient fathers were all, or almoſt all, ſo far Montaniſts, as to think ſecond marriages, in ſome degree, criminal.' His argument proves nothing at all: for we find ſeveral other actions, which the biſhops endeavoured to withdraw men from, out of ſome decency or motive of perfection and virtue, ſubjected to canonical penance. Read the penitential of St. Theodore, &c. The praiſes which St. Jerome beſtows on Fabiola, a Roman lady of the firſt rank, for the fervour and humility with which ſhe aſked and underwent canonical penance for a ſecond marriage, ſhew this to have been an action of perfection. He advances, that St. Jerome condemns even firſt marriages as ſinful, quoting his firſt book againſt Jovinian. The expreſſions of that father are ſomewhat ſtrong: but in his letter to Euſtochium, where he uſes the very ſame, he explains himſelf that he calls marriage evil, only as leſs perfect, and leſs excellent than virginity: for he adds, that it is good and honourable in itſelf; which if it were not, it could not be compared with virginity; for only good can be compared with good. He calls the book of Tertullian heretical, in which he condemned ſecond marriages. (in c. 1 Tit. p. 415.) He ſays: 'My calumniators may ſee that I allowed ſecond and third marriages in the Lord. How then could I cenſure firſt marriages?' (Apol. pro libris adv. Jovin. p. 232.) And (ep. 27. ad Marcellam. p. 64.) 'We do not encourage, but we allow ſecond marriages, Paul commanding that young widows marry.' Mr. Bower wilfully ſuppreſſed all theſe and many other ſuch paſſages of St. Jerome, becauſe they would have deſtroyed his ſlander, and have proved him to have openly falſified his doctrine, unleſs we believe Mr. Bower rather than St. Jerome himſelf about his own ſentiments. Mr. Bower in this ſame note, p. 334, writes: 'all cannot contain, and God and nature have provided no other remedy againſt incontinence but marriage.' What then muſt young perſons do who often cannot marry, yet are expoſed to the moſt violent

violent temptations of any age? What muſt they do who in a married ſtate, by ſeveral circumſtances which are not very rare, cannot cohabit together?

In his life of Pope Gregory the great, page 401, he writes in a long annotation: 'If they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn, ſays St. Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 9. But no, ſays the church of Rome, excepting her clergy from that general command: if they cannot contain let them faſt, watch, cover themſelves with hair-cloths, whip themſelves: let them with St. Benet roll themſelves naked upon thorns, or with St. Francis in the ſnow: and if the inbred fire continues ſtill unextinguiſhed and alive, let them burn; for it is better to burn than to marry—that in ſome there is no medium between marriage and burning is evident beyond contradiction, from the words of the Apoſtle quoted above.—All men cannot receive this ſaying, ſave they to whom it is given.' Mat. xix. 11, 12, &c. All this reaſoning is built on falſifications of the Holy Scriptures, and on the moſt glaring ſophiſtry. Chriſt did not ſay, all men cannot, but, all do not take this word, as the original Greek word expreſſes it. Again, 1 Cor. vii. 9. St. Paul does not ſay, 'If they cannot contain,' as the Proteſtant tranſlation has evidently corrupted the text, but, 'If they do not contain,' as the original reads it. Mr. Bower was ſenſible of this; and ought to have offered ſome reaſons for the alteration of the word of God in the tranſlation, if he had deſigned to reaſon juſtly: but this was a ſtring which he did not care to touch, becauſe it would have diſcovered the falſifications which ſcarce any of his readers will examine. The aſſurance with which they are advanced, carries an air to impoſe upon readers by an art familiar to thoſe who want proofs. It is evident that both Chriſt and St. Paul, in the places here quoted, declare that voluntary chaſtity for the ſake of the kingdom of Heaven is an excellency, and an excellent ſtate of life, as Dr. Wells confeſſes, on St. Matthew, Page 185. But our author ſays: they ſpeak of perſons who cannot contain. This is contradicted by all the circumſtances of the texts. Chriſt ſays: 'He that can take, let him take it,' viz. Chaſtity, verſe 12. By which words he exhorts to that heroic ſtate thoſe who have courage. Therefore he ſuppoſes it a voluntary virtue, with the help of grace. For who exhorts to what is not in the power of men? Does he exhort men to propheſy? The meaning

meaning of theſe words is; let thoſe embrace this, who find themſelves inſpired by God with a will and ſufficient courage. Or it is to be expounded as that, Mat. xiii. 'Let him who has ears hear;' which means not that ſome have no ears; but Chriſt exhorts all to uſe the faculty which they have. S. Paul adviſes all to live according to their gift, 1 Cor. vii. But he ſpeaks of the gift of marriage, and conjugal chaſtity, no leſs than of that of virginity: for both are gifts of grace; but neither is refuſed to thoſe who pray for it, and ſeek it earneſtly. Tertullian (l. de Monog. near the end) ſays: 'If you cannot, it is becauſe you will not. For he ſhews that you can if you will, becauſe he leaves both to your choice.' St. Jerome writes (l. 3. in Mat. 19. p. 87. T. 4. ed: Ben:) 'It is given to thoſe who have aſked it, who have deſired it, who have laboured to obtain it; for it ſhall be given to every one who aſks, &c.' St. Chryſoſtom explains this at length, on the ſame paſſage of St. Matthew. And St. Gregory Nazianzen (Or. 31.) 'It is given to thoſe who will, and who aſſent.' (See Origen in Mat. 19. St. Ambroſe l. 3. de Virgin. & l. de Viduis.) St. Auguſtine ſays to God, (l. 6. Conf. c. 11.) 'You would give continence, if I aſked it.'

Marriage is indeed one remedy againſt concupiſcence, which thoſe who do not chooſe others, are adviſed to have recourſe to. It is a remedy intended in the order of nature: was of precept in the beginning of the world, and immediately after the deluge; and is now ſometimes in regard to particular perſons, on whoſe iſſue the public peace depends or the like. Except the caſe of ſuch extraordinary circumſtances, men are at liberty to chooſe the more excellent ſtate of Virginity, and if they will practiſe the means, have it always in their power to obtain that gift of God. Marriage is a remedy to concupiſcence, but a violent one, and a perſon ſtands in need of great virtue to ſupport all its difficulties, and acquit himſelf of all its obligations. If concupiſcence be ſtill unextinguiſhed, will Mr. Bower allow the remedy which Luther indulged to his patron the Landgrave of Heſſe? viz. to have two wives at once. Mr. Bower I hope experienced, before he had the misfortune to ſuffer his heart to be overcome by a Dalila, that habits of virtue make its practice eaſy, and weaken and almoſt extinguiſh the rebellion of the paſſions, which habits of vice fortify even to decrepid old age. Mr. Bower

Bower in the means preſcribed by the fathers and aſcetics to obtain the gift of chaſtity, always forgets the principal of all, which is humility. They unanimouſly repeat with our pious and great father Hilton, that a man will often ſooner kill himſelf by auſterities, than be able to vanquiſh this domeſtic enemy by them alone, unleſs he accompanies his mortification with humility and prayer. We muſt allow ſome degree of exterior mortification neceſſary to ſubdue our paſſions, or we muſt burn every page of the goſpels and of St. Paul, and of all the fathers. But no catholic lays that ſtreſs upon it which this author pretends, or makes that a principal which is no more than a help, and a very imperfect one too unleſs aſſiſted by others which are greater, eſpecially by ſincere humility and fervent prayer. But Mr. Bower thinks marriage the only remedy for concupiſcence. If this be ſo, he muſt entirely unhinge the goſpel-laws concerning marriage, and allow in hundreds of caſes polygamy and frequent divorces at the diſcretion of either party. It is well known indeed that Luther, Melancton, and Bucer, granted a diſpenſation to their great patron Philip, Landgrave of Heſſe, to marry a ſecond wife, the firſt being yet living, becauſe that prince was fallen in love with Margaret de la Saal; and becauſe he alleged that being obliged to high living, and plentiful drinking, by his rank in the world, he could not contain, or content himſelf with his firſt wife. The letter of the Landgrave and the anſwer of Luther, were moſt authentically publiſhed by one of the deſcendents of that Prince, and may be read at length in Juenin or Boſſuet. Seckendorf, Privy-Counſellor to the Elector of Saxony, (in his commentarius hiſtoricus et apologeticus de Lutheraniſmo againſt Maimhourg, at Francfort and Leipſic, 1692.) urges in excuſe for Luther that he and his fellow-divines required of the Landgrave ſecrecy for fear of ſcandal; but that the vanity of the woman and her mother publiſhed the marriage, and the allowance of the archreformers. The ſame author mentions, that though Luther condemned bigamy as never lawful, and divorces, (except in the cauſe of adultery,) yet he allowed a certain paſtor, by name Michael Cramer, to have three wives at once. The firſt had left him to lead a lewd life: the ſecond had done the ſame out of a ſcruple. He conſulted Luther, who anſwered in the words of St. Paul: 'If the infidel departs, the brother or ſiſter is not ſubject to the law.' In the viſi-

tation

tation he was accuſed, but ſhewing this letter of Luther was acquitted. (See Seckendorf, l. 2. p. 31.)

Mr. Bower writes p. 46, that 'the Gothic nation became at the ſame time both Chriſtian and Arian.' It is certain that the Catholic faith was planted among the Goths long before the Arian. They began to receive the goſpel about the year 260. Sozomen (b. 2. ch. 6.) relates that in their incurſions into Aſia they carried off many prieſts and other chriſtians captives, by whoſe miracles and preaching many of them embraced the faith. Philoſtorgius, the Arian hiſtorian, gives the ſame account, (b. 2. ch. 5.) and ſays theſe captives came out of Galatia and Cappadocia, and that Ulphilas was a decendant of ſome who then came from Cappadocia. Hence St. Baſil (ep 338. p. 330.) teſtifies that the ſeeds of the Goſpel among the Goths came from Cappadocia by the means of bleſſed Eutychius, a man of eminent virtue, who, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, and his gifts, ſoftened the hearts of the barbarians. St. Cyril of Jeruſalem (cat. 16. n. 22.) places the Goths and Sarmatians among the Chriſtians who had Biſhops, Prieſts, Deacons, Monks, Virgins and Martyrs. In the council of Nice, among the ſubſcriptions is that of Theophilus biſhop of Gothia. The Goths therefore were firſt Catholics, and received the faith from Catholics. Ulphilas ſucceeded Theophilus in his biſhopric, and followed the Catholic faith as his predeceſſors had all done, till he apoſtatiſed to the Arians. Athanaric, king of the Thervingian Goths who lived next to the ſubjects of the empire, and was its mortal enemy, perſecuted the Chriſtians in 370. Fritigernes, king of the Weſtern Goths, being at war with Athanaric, and unequal to him in ſtrength, to court the favour of the Arian emperor Valens, embraced the Chriſtian religion with the Arian Hereſy, in which Ulphilas became his tool, as Socrates (b. 2. ch. 42.) and Zozomen (b. 6. ch. 37.) expreſsly ſay; abandoning the faith of his fathers, as Theodoret writes (b. 4. ch. 33.) This Ulphilas had tranſlated the Bible into the Gothic Tongue, invented the Gothic alphabet, and taught that people to write. In the year 374, St. Baſil (ep. 164. p. 254.) commends the zeal of the Goths for the Catholic faith. But in 376 Ulphilas being ſent to Conſtantinople to procure an exchange of certain lands in Thrace from the Emperor Valens, was gained over to Arianiſm by the crafty Eudoxius and others of that ſect, as Sozomen (b. 6. ch. 37.) and Theodoret

(b. 4.

(b. 4. ch. 33.) teſtify. But the perſecuted church under Athanaric continued ſtill untainted. Hence the acts of the Martyrdom of St. Sabas were drawn up by St. Aſcolus biſhop of Theſſalonica, a prelate cloſely linked with St. Athanaſius, and they were addreſſed to St. Baſil and the other Catholics of Cappadocia. St. Baſil teſtifies (ep. 70. p. 164, 165.) that one of the confeſſors beyond the Danube coming into Cappadocia wonderfully confounded the Arians. St. Auguſtine writes (de Civit. Dei. b. 18. c. 52.) that the King of the Goths perſecuted the Chriſtians when there were none but Catholics in Gothia. F. Stilting, the Bollandiſt, (in a diſſertation de Ruſſorum converſione et fide, Act. Sanct. T. 41. Sept. 2.) evidently demonſtrates that the Muſcovites, though long ſince engaged in the Greek ſchiſm, were at firſt Catholics during all the eleventh age, and many of them long after that time, and that at the time of the council of Florence they were divided into oppoſite halves.

Our biographer, p. 466, very much miſrepreſents the diſputation of St. Gregory with Eutychius at Conſtantinople; for it is very falſe that the Emperor Tiberius pretended to take cognizance of that point of faith, or evoke the affair to his tribunal. St. Gregory had the happineſs to put a ſtop to an error in its riſe by his prudence, piety and learning: and he found in St. Eutychius a docile humble heart which was a ſtranger to obſtinacy and pride, the ſource of all hereſies. Origen put a ſtop in the ſame manner to a riſing hereſy in Arabia, and other ſuch inſtances might be added. To infer that the authority of an Emperor would have ſufficed to prevent hereſies better than that of general councils, is very abſurd and unjuſt, and no leſs contrary to the ſcriptures and to the conſtant practice and tradition of the church than to reaſon and experience. This very author had juſt before mentioned an unhappy inſtance in Juſtinian, who, though he was better qualified for a Divine than moſt Emperors, yet by intermeddling in eccleſiaſtical affairs more than belonged to him, and by preſuming to publiſh a definition in a matter of faith, became the unhappy author or abetter of the hereſy of the Incorrupticols, and ſullied the glory of all his illuſtrious actions. Neither yet was he able to eſtabliſh his error. Conſtantius, to paſs over others, is ſtill a more remarkable proof of the ſame thing, whoſe whole hiſtory ſhews how much he embroiled the church, inſtead of exalting

alting it by his authority. It is a little ſurprizing to read in Mr. Bower's annotation, p. 470, that the cuſtom of bleſſing thoſe who ſneeze, is ſaid to have had its original, in the peſtilence in Rome in the time of St. Gregory. He quotes no authority but popular tradition, which indeed might ſatisfy Maimbourg who wrote only to amuſe and pleaſe his reader, but one verſed in the claſſics, and an adept in the Belles Lettres ought to have known that the Rabbins among the Jews aſcribe that cuſtom to the times of Jacob, or more early, though their authority is of ſmall weight in ſuch a point: but both the Greek and Roman authors frequently mention that cuſtom; The former uſing theſe words, Ζεῦς σε σώσει: the latter, Jupiter Soſpitet. The jeſt of Ariſtophanes about the man with ſo long a noſe that his ears could not hear what paſſed in his noſtrils, and who on that account could not perform this ceremony, ſhews the antiquity of the cuſtom. We have ſo many learned diſſertations in the memoirs of literature and Belles Lettres on this ſubject, which leave it a moot point whether this bleſſing at ſneezing was originally intended for a prayer, or a ceremony of civility, that any gentleman of reading muſt have met with frequent mention of a much higher antiquity of this cuſtom than that alleged by Mr. Bower. This is only taken notice of to ſhew that he himſelf can lay a ſtreſs on the moſt groundleſs popular tradition.

LETTER IX.

On St. Gregory the Great; *the ſchiſm of the* Three Chapters: *concerning Images, and the antient* Britons.

THE diſcant on the celebrated declaration of pope Gregory, p. 470, that he received the four firſt general councils as the four goſpels, is all founded in miſrepreſentation. St. Gregory only received thoſe councils as declarations of the faith taught in the goſpels, and delivered by the apoſtles to the church. This was not to make them any new foundation. The faith taught by the apoſtles is the only foundation of our belief: ſince their time it neither has received nor can receive any increaſe or alteration. The church is only the guardian of the depoſite. Its voice in general councils only defines what it received from them, and what it always believed. Such councils might be call-

ed by St. Gregory unſhaken foundations of our faith, becauſe they are unerring deciſions of that faith derived from the apoſtles, which muſt not be touched; but he does not mean them to be foundations in the ſame ſenſe with the goſpels, much leſs to be equal with them, or to 'raiſe them above the four goſpels,' as our author calumniates. The Scriptures are dictated by the Holy Ghoſt, and are written by his revelation and ſpecial inſpiration: No general council has ſuch a privilege, though in deciſions concerning articles of faith, by the direction of a particular providence and divine aſſiſtance, of which we have the unerring promiſes of Chriſt, it is likewiſe unerring, and is not to be rejected by any of the faithful any more than the ſcriptures, of which it contains a true unerring interpretation, by tradition, preſerved ſecurely by the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt.

Mr. Bower boaſts, p. 486, to find that St. Columbanus defended the Three Chapters, after they were condemned by the fifth council at Conſtantinople, and by the pope: and becauſe he wrote in defence of them to Boniface IV. in 614, the year before his death, he infers againſt Baronius that the Iriſh were not diſabuſed of their miſtake in that point by the letters which pope Gregory wrote to them on that ſubject in 592. But St. Columbanus had left Ireland, and having paſſed through Britain and France, was ſettled in Burgundy in 520. He went into Italy in 612, where he founded the monaſtery of Bobbio in Lombardy by the aſſiſtance of king Agilulph and his queen Theodelinda, and from thence he wrote the letter mentioned, at the ſolicitation of thoſe two princes who favoured the Three Chapters, out of ignorance, imagining the council of Chalcedon had been condemned at Conſtantinople: and pope Gregory bore with them on that account, as he did with many others on that affair. Dr. Cave confeſſes (hiſt. litt. T. 1. p. 543.) that 'it is evident from this very epiſtle of Columbanus, that he was not rightly informed in the affair of the Three Chapters.' Commerce with diſtant countries was then very difficult, and we ſee the greateſt part of the Weſt ſtrangers to the affairs in the Eaſt. The clergy in Lombardy had very falſe informations of the deciſions of the Orientals with relation to the council of Chalcedon, and the Three Chapters. Columbanus ſettling among them imbibed their miſtaken notions as to certain remote facts, and was ordered to write this letter by king Agilulph and queen Theodelinda, who were his great benefactors

benefactors and the founders and patrons of his monaſtery of Bobbio. The biſhops of Iſtria, and ſome in Africa, defended the Three Chapters with ſuch warmth as to break off communion with the Pope and the Catholic Church, and to ſet up a declared ſchiſm. Several among the Lombards, &c. harboured miſtaken prejudices in favour of the Three Chapters, grounded on miſinformations; but did not break communion. St. Gregory tolerated their conduct, till they could be better informed, as their faith was orthodox, and king Agilulph and queen Theodelinda were perſons of ſingular zeal and piety, had converted their ſubjects from the Arian hereſy, founded many monaſteries and churches, &c.

Our hiſtorian, p. 498, 499, crowds together almoſt as many blunders and falſifications as words to ſhew, as he pretends, that we have no acts of canons even of the firſt councils, on which we can depend. Some tranſactions in certain councils have been regarded as uncertain in hiſtory; though the inſtances produced by Mr. Bower are none of them ſuch: the catholics both of the Eaſt and Weſt always regarded the ſame firſt council of Epheſus as true and general; none but the Eutychians received that of Dioſcorus. In the Nicene creed, he ſays the 'Latins will have the words, *and the Son*, to have been ſtruck out by the Greeks.' One who has ever read either divinity or hiſtory cannot but know that the Latin church never charged the Greeks with ſuch an interpolation of that Creed, though it condemns their modern error in denying the proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt from the Son with the Father. Mr. Bower, p. 300, cannot commend the purity of the doctrine of St. Gregory better than by proving him to have always practiſed and taught the moſt ſtrict obedience and the moſt dutiful allegiance of the clergy to the emperor: but St. Gregory does not give the emperor any ſpiritual juriſdiction, much leſs ſupremacy over the church. What the biographer writes againſt the depoſing power in popes, certainly cannot be made a reproach againſt the catholics of England, France, Spain, &c. It is a doctrine neither taught nor tolerated in any catholic kingdom that I know of, and which many catholics write as warmly againſt as Mr. Bower could wiſh. The malicious reflections which Mr. Bower caſts, p. 514, &c. on the virtue of St. Auguſtine, the apoſtle of England, ſufficiently deſtroy themſelves. He is very angry that St. Gregory uſed ſo much condeſcenſion to our anceſtors on their firſt converſion, as to order their temples to be con-

verted into Chriſtian churches, and feſtivals of the myſteries of our redemption to be inſtituted in ſuch a manner that they might wean the converts from their idolatrous feaſts. I wonder he ſhould forget that St. Paul made himſelf all things to all men, to gain them to Chriſt, and that the apoſtles uſed condeſcenſions to the Jews with regard to the legal ceremonies. We may call the heathen temples when purified and conſecrated to the true God, the ſpoils of Egypt dedicated to the ſervice of God, more properly than the learning of the Pagan philoſophers. This only betrays an inclination to graſp at any thing that may ſeem to reflect on religion.

The biographer could not forbear his boaſtings, p. 526, on the letter of pope Gregory to Serenus biſhop of Marſeilles, reprimanding him for breaking ſacred images which ſome converts ſuperſtitiouſly adored, though commending his zeal in preventing ſuch abuſes. b. 11. ep. 13. Mr. Bower with Dr. Stillingfleet, &c. pretends that St. Gregory condemns all ſacred honour to holy images, even that which is only relative; whereas he evidently ſpeaks of idolatrous worſhip, and in his epiſtle to Secundinus, (b. 9. ep. 52.) who had aſked of him a picture of our Saviour, he writes: 'I know that you do not aſk the image of our Saviour to adore it as a God, but that by the remembrance of him whoſe picture you deſire, you may be moved to his love. We proſtrate ourſelves before it not as before a divinity: but we adore him whom we remember by the image borne or ſuffering, and alſo ſitting on his throne.—Therefore we have ſent you two cloths containing the image of God our Saviour, and of the holy mother of God Mary, and of the bleſſed apoſtles Peter and Paul—and one croſs. Alſo a key for a benediction, taken from the moſt holy body of Peter the prince of the apoſtles, that you may remain defended from your enemy by it.' This laſt paſſage concerning the pictures of Chriſt and the bleſſed Virgin, is quoted by Paul the deacon, by the council of Rome (T. 6. Conc. p. 1462. and T. 7. p. 961.) and by Adrian I. in his letter to Charlemagne in defence of the ſecond council of Nice. Mr. Bower always uſes the words worſhip and adoration of holy images or reliques, to ſlander the catholics as if they taught or practiſed an abſolute or divine worſhip of them, though he knows that it is no more ſo than the bowing to the communion-table or at the name of Jeſus, or at the Glory be to the Father, as I have ſeen the whole congregation do together

ther in proteſtant churches, and very low, without any fear of idolatry: nay, no more than Mr. Bower is an idolater; becauſe as I preſume, he did not ſcruple to uſe the word worſhip, to expreſs the reſpect which he paid to his lady in the ceremony of his marriage. Before he can prove that the veneration which the catholic church pays to holy things whether the goſpels, reliques, holy pictures, churches, &c. can be deemed idolatrous, he ought to ſhew that he who takes off his hat to the king's chair, is guilty of high treaſon againſt his majeſty, and that he who has any reſpect for the picture of his father, or is angry at thoſe who trample upon it, commits an heinous contempt of him whom he only does this to reſpect and honour. Mr. Bower ſeems ſenſible of the inconſiſtency of ſuch a way of reaſoning. Wherefore to make out his charge of idolatry, he adds, p. 526, that, 'among the vulgar, ſcarce one in a thouſand carries his worſhip beyond the image itſelf.' There is no catholic who in the firſt rudiments of his catechiſm does not learn the contrary, and he might as well affirm that proteſtants pay divine honours to the images of the lion and unicorn, becauſe he ſees it in their churches. Mr. Weever, a zealous proteſtant, in his diſcourſe on funeral monuments, p. 117, teſtifies that theſe Latin verſes were written under the picture of Chriſt uſually in all abbey-churches in England before the diſſolution: "Effigiem Chriſti dum tranſis, ſemper honora. Non tamen effigiem, ſed quem deſignat, adora. Nam Deus eſt quod imago docet, ſed non Deus ipſa: hunc videas et mente colas quod cernis in illa." That is in Engliſh: 'Honour the image of Chriſt whilſt thou paſſeſt by, adoring not the image, but him whom it repreſents.' Which is what every Catholic is carefully taught.

The author ſays a great deal, p. 527, to make his reader believe that the antient Britons profeſſed a different religion from that which St. Auguſtine taught the Engliſh, and that they looked upon the latter to bear a great reſemblance to Paganiſm in its rites, ceremonies and worſhip, and as no better than Paganiſm. The antient Britons and Scots celebrated Eaſter, not with the Orientals or Quartodecimans (apud Euſ. l. 5. c. 22.) always on the 14th day of the firſt ſpring moon, as the Jews did, but on the Sunday after it, or which fell upon the ſaid 14th day, as Bede expreſsly affirms (l. 3. c. 4 and 17.) which laſt circumſtance was againſt the definition of the council of Nice; but the firſt circumſtance contradicted the practice of the Orientals; which

which reflection overthrows the pretended proof of our author that they received their faith, not from Rome, but from the Eaſt. That point is indeed of little conſequence: only the truth of hiſtory is not to be adulterated. And it is certain that the Britons received the faith from Rome. Bede (l. 1. c. 4.) and all our hiſtorians ſay that king Lucius received preachers and inſtructions in the faith from the pope Eleutherius towards the decline of the ſecond century. They then received the Roman cuſtoms. The council of Arles in 314 confirmed the Roman diſcipline in the celebration of Eaſter; in which ſynod were three Britiſh Biſhops, of London, Colcheſter and York, who could not but bring its decrees home with them. The ſame was commended by the council of Nice in 325. And Conſtantine that ſame year reckoned the Britons among thoſe that agreed with Rome in the keeping of Eaſter. They therefore fell into their miſtaken practice after that time; by what means we know not. Gildas teſtifies that the faith remained without the leaſt diviſion in this iſland till that cauſed by the Arian hereſy. Mr. Bower ſays, the Popes are no where read to have pretended any juriſdiction in Britain before the coming of St. Auguſtine: therefore he concludes that they claimed none. But if they are proved to have both claimed and exerciſed a juriſdiction over the whole church, certainly Britain was compriſed, eſpecially as it had received its faith from Rome, and was in the patriarchate of the Weſt. We find the Popes exerciſing their ſupremacy in Gaul, Spain, &c. Why muſt their neighbours be excepted? Moreover, hiſtory furniſhes, even in thoſe ages of which our country has preſerved ſo few records, expreſs monuments of that juriſdiction exerciſed by the Popes in Britain. Not to inſiſt on the miſſions of St. Palladius to the Scots, and of St. Patrick to the Iriſh, both ſent by Pope Celeſtine I. as St. Proſper and Bede teſtify: that ſame Pope deputed St. Germanus, Biſhop of Auxerre, to go over into Britain to oppoſe the Pelagian hereſy, which had been ſpread there by one Agricola; for which purpoſe he inveſted him with the quality of his legate, "vice ſua mittit," as Proſper informs us (in Chronico.) The prelates of Gaul gave him St. Lupus for colleague. Bede indeed only mentions that they were ſent by the Gauliſh Biſhops: but St. Proſper who was at that very time one of the moſt learned and eminent perſons in Gaul, expreſsly ſays that St. Germanus was not only ſent by Pope Celeſtine,

Celeſtine, but as his delegate. It is plain that the old Britons held the ſame faith with the Biſhops of Rome: for in the frequent intercourſe of perſons we find no difference in religion complained of. Thus St. Ninian ſtudied divinity at Rome before he returned into Britain, where he died in 432. And when the Saxons were converted, St. Auguſtine required of the Britiſh biſhops only three things; 1ſt, That they ſhould keep Eaſter at the due time: 2dly, That they ſhould adminiſter baptiſm according to the manner uſed in the church of Rome: 3dly, That they ſhould aſſiſt him in preaching the faith to the Saxons. If he had found them denying the doctrine of praying for the dead, invoking Saints, &c. (which he practiſed according to Bede,) or the ſupremacy of the Pope, it is evident that thoſe points ſhould have been mentioned by him, and much more than thoſe of diſcipline, which he ſpoke of. Nay, Bede expreſsly teſtifies, that the Britons confeſſed it to be the way of righteouſneſs which St. Auguſtine taught, (b. 2. c. 2.) Nor could they deny the miracle of the blind man reſtored to ſight by him in their preſence. But Mr. Bower, p. 528, ſtiffly maintains that the Biſhops of Rome never exerciſed or claimed any power or juriſdiction whatever over the Britiſh church before the arrival of Auſtin: which he pretends evident from the refuſal of the Britons to receive for their archbiſhop or primate one placed over them by the Pope, as is related by Bede (b. 2. ch. 2.) But the gentleman muſt be himſelf perſuaded that there are very few if any archbiſhops or primates in France, Spain, Germany, Poland or any other Catholic country, out of the Pope's own dominions, who would receive in ſilence a new primate placed over them againſt the diſcipline of their church, and againſt the prerogatives of their own Sees, as the Britons took the caſe then to be. The Pope is the maintainer of the canons, and of the privileges of each church. For erecting a new metropolitan to the prejudice of the dignity of other Sees, the reaſons ought to be cogent and notorious. Therefore the Britiſh biſhops then did no more than what biſhops who are ready to die for the ſupremacy of the Pope, would do at this day. Pope Gregory certainly thought he had good reaſons to do what he did: and the reformation and inſtruction of that people ſeemed to require it. He certainly knew that he had authority, upon ſufficient reaſons, to alter the metropolitan juriſdiction of particular churches, or he would not have pretended to

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give St. Auguſtine the juriſdiction of a metropolitan over the Welch who had their own archbiſhops before. Their inveterate hatred againſt the Engliſh their old enemies, rendered them more unwilling to be ſubject to their new Archbiſhop. The biographer exceeds all bounds when he advances, that Britain did not belong to the Roman Patriarchate. King James I. ſaid, in his premonition to his apology for the oath of allegiance, addreſſed to the Emperor and to all Chriſtian monarchs; 'I being a Weſtern King would go with the Patriarch of the Weſt.' Mr. Bower adds: 'It was with good reaſon that the Britiſh biſhops declared (if we allow the Britiſh manuſcript quoted by Spelman to be genuine) that they were under the juriſdiction of the biſhop of Caerleon on the Uſk, who was under God their ſpiritual overſeer. For this was truly their caſe, and the like anſwer would the biſhops of Gaul, Spain, or Africa have returned in the like caſe.' We have ſeen the Biſhops of thoſe countries often applying to the See of Rome, and receiving its ſentence, as St. Auguſtine did againſt the Pelagians; and we have ſeen Britiſh biſhops receiving St. Germanus veſted with the legatine authority of the biſhops of Rome. As to the Welch manuſcript, it is a piece evidently forged, and of a very late date. The title was added by Sir Henry Spelman. There was then no Archbiſhop of Caerleon upon Uſk: the metropolitan See had been tranſlated from that city to Landaff by St. Dubritius; and ſoon after, in the time of King Arthur, to Menew by St. David, almoſt fourſcore years before the coming of St Auguſtine. Moreover, Mr. Turberville, a learned Welch gentleman, has demonſtrated that the forger diſcovers his own impoſture in every line, by the mixture of Engliſh words, Angliciſms in the expreſſion, and ſpelling throughout as an Engliſh ſmatterer in the Cambrian language; uſing V conſonant for the Cambrian F; U vowel for W: uſing the letter K unknown in the Cambrian alphabet, and in ſome places an evident Angliciſm. He adds many other moſt undeniable inſtances of forgery, and proofs from the ſtyle, &c. that it was framed ſometime after the reformation. See his Manual of Controverſies, p. 406.

Our author diſplays his eloquence and ſophiſtry, p. 505, 506, 507, on the zeal which Pope Gregory ſhewed in condemning the title of œcumenical or univerſal biſhop; which he accuſes as proud, profane, antichriſtian, impious, and blaſphemous; which John the Faſter, patriarch of Conſtan-

Conſtantinople, had aſſumed, as St. Gregory ſays, in pride, to the debaſement of the whole epiſcopal order; adding, 'that to agree to that impious title was parting with our faith; for Chriſt alone is head of the univerſal Church; the Apoſtle Peter the firſt member of it,' p. 549. Mr. Bower pretends that Pope Gregory could not take that title as meaning all other biſhops to be only vicars to the univerſal biſhop, becauſe this, ſays he, would have been madneſs; and he condemns it becauſe it ſubjected all other biſhops to him, and of a member made him head of the church, with a power over its members which was peculiar to Chriſt alone, and never aſſumed by any of the Apoſtles; no, not by Peter himſelf. In anſwer to this: the word œcumenical ſignifies ſtrictly univerſal or of the whole world. Maimbourg, a writer more ſolicitous to render his ſtyle and hiſtory pleaſing than to write with exactitude, advances in his hiſtory of St. Gregory, b. 2, that no council took the title of œcumenical before that of Chalcedon. But this is a blunder, ſuch as he often makes: for the council of Epheſus calls itſelf ſo in many places, and that word properly agrees to a general council, becauſe it is made up of the biſhops of the whole world. The word might have another idea fixt to it, and ſo have an innocent meaning in the ſenſe in which John aſſumed it. For the city of Conſtantinople might be ſtyled œcumenical or capital of the world; and in the ſame ſenſe its biſhop might be called œcumenical, or biſhop of the imperial city, or of the capital of the world. It might, thirdly, ſignify a general patriarch, or over many provinces; as the Roman empire was ſtyled the world or œcumenical, becauſe it was a large part; and as one who commands many is called a general. But ſuch a title, even in an innocent ſenſe, was a novelty in the church, and a mark of pride and arrogance. And pope Gregory took it in the rigorous ſenſe of the word, as if it ſhould mean a biſhop who repreſents the whole church, as a general council does, ſo that he ſhould ceaſe to be a member of the church, and ſhould be the head over it in that ſenſe which agrees only to Chriſt; for he adds, that even St. Peter was a member of it. Such an idea of this title would make all other biſhops only vicars to him, though with the title of biſhops. In this ſenſe the title would be impious and blaſphemous, as St. Gregory argues. In a general council the ſame word means that it repreſents the whole church: on this account St. Gre-

St. Gregory underſtood it in ſuch a ſenſe. He ſays that on that account no Pope had aſſumed it, though it was given by the council of Chalcedon to Pope Leo. (b. 5. ep. 10.) as indeed we ſee in the diſcourſe of ſome particulars in that ſynod, (Act. 3. & 6.) Afterwards in the fifth and ſixth councils the title œcumenical was given both to the Pope and to the Biſhop of Canſtantinople. The latter takes it to this day. Whether any Pope ever did accept an addreſs under that title is a matter of no moment: at leaſt it was never adopted by the Popes. It is evident that neither John nor any other Biſhop of Conſtantinople pretended by it to ſhare the ſupremacy with the Pope. St. Gregory, tho' he rejected that title, aſſerted continually the ſupremacy of his ſee. His epiſtles, and all the tranſactions of his pontificate, ſhew that he exerciſed it over all Europe, in Africa, Ægypt, Aſia, and in the very biſhopric of Conſtantinople: for he abſolved two Prieſts whom John had excommunicated, who had appealed to the Pope, and the patriarch had ſent the depoſitions received againſt them to Rome. (b. 6. ep. 15, 16, 17.) And both the emperor and the patriarch acknowledged the ſuperior juriſdiction of the Apoſtolic See. (b. 9. ep. 12. p. 941.) St. Gregory profeſſes often that the care of the whole church was committed to him. (l. 3 ep. 39.) "Apoſtolica ſedes, Deo auctore, cunctis prælata conſtat eccleſiis—(l. 5. ep. 13.) Curæ nobis fuit, quæ univerſis eccleſiis a nobis impenditur—(l. 7. ep. 19.) Cunctarum eccleſiarum injuncta nos ſollicitudinis cura conſtringit—(l. 5. ep. 20.) Omnium apoſtolorum principi Petro totius eccleſiæ cura commiſſa eſt —Paſce oves meas—Cura ei totius et principatus committitur, et tamen univerſalis apoſtolus non vocatur." He ſays that all Biſhops are ſubject to the See of Rome in caſe of any fault: otherwiſe all are equal by humility. "Si quæ culpa in epiſcopis invenitur neſcio quis ei epiſcopus ſubjectus non ſit. Cum vero culpa non exigit, omnes ſecundum rationem humilitatis æquales ſunt." (l. 9 ep. 59.)

In Boniface III. p. 548, Mr. Bower pretends that the emperor Phocas firſt gave that Pope the ſupremacy, by declaring the title of œcumenical biſhop to belong to him, and forbidding the patriarch of Conſtantinople ever to aſſume it. But he adds, that Phocas being killed three years after, the biſhop of Conſtantinople reaſſumed that title, and would no more acknowledge the Pope for univerſal biſhop than the Pope acknowledged him. This laſt circumſtance is the moſt notorious falſity; for all monuments teſtify that

the Biſhops of Conſtantinople, with all the Eaſt, continued to own the ſupremacy of the See of Rome till the great ſchiſm. The reſt is no leſs evident miſrepreſentation. The biſhops of Conſtantinople reſumed indeed that title, but in a Catholic ſenſe, meaning only that they were biſhops of the city, which was the capital of the world, or general patriarchs over many metropolitans. Though Phocas gave that title to Pope Boniface III, the Popes, in ſucceeding times, never uſed it, though they might have done it much more juſtly than the biſhops of Conſtantinople. The decree of Phocas is not extant; but it evidently gave no authority to the Pope, and barely regarded the ſaid title. So weak and tottering was the reign of that tyrant, that no law made by him could have ſettled ſuch a novelty, as this is pretended. Moreover, we have ſeen that the Popes before that time had always claimed and exerciſed ſuch a ſupremacy. See even Mr. Bower himſelf on Innocent I. Zozimus, Leo I. &c; and the remarks above. Though indeed this author not only omits, but often notoriouſly falſifies the paſſages which proves the ſupremacy. Thus when Pope Sylverius was baniſhed to Patara by the empero Juſtinian, the biſhop of that city expoſtulated with the emperor in his defence. Our Author, p. 366, thus mentions his remonſtrance. 'He acquainted Juſtinian with the baſe treatment which the firſt biſhop of the Catholic Church had met with.' Liberatus who relates this fact, and is of moſt unqueſtionable authority and exactitude, and lived in that very age, writes, ch. 22, in the place quoted by Mr. Bower, that the Biſhop, denouncing the threats of the Divine Judgments for the expulſion of the Biſhop of ſo great a See, ſaid, 'That there are many kings in the world, and not one alone; but that there is only one Pope over the Church of the whole world.' "Multos eſſe dicens in hoc Mundo Reges, et non eſſe unum ſicut ille unus eſt Papa ſuper Eccleſiam totius mundi." Theſe were the words of an Oriental biſhop.

My buſineſs being only to throw together ſome remarks on the Hiſtory of the Popes, I do not add the proofs of the papal ſupremacy. I have only mentioned ſuch reflections as occured in a haſty turning over this work. I preſume that in his next volume he will pretend that the Popes, during the civil wars of Italy, uſurped the ſovereignty of Rome, &c: for the outlines of ſuch a ſcheme ſeem already drawn. I believe few Princes can ſhew more

authentic

authentic titles to their dominions than the See of Rome, whether we conſider preſcription, or the free gifts of the Counteſs Maud, or of the Emperor Charlemagne, &c. on which we may conſult Natalis Alexander, an author not very favourable to the Holy See, and a ſevere critic. However, I am not in concern as to that point, any farther than the intereſt of any hiſtorical truth againſt ſlander ought to weigh with every impartial perſon. I am not intereſted in the maintenance of the dominions of the See of Rome; its ſpiritual prerogatives are the ſubject of our diſquiſition. Theſe cannot be prejudiced even by the unworthineſs of men, unleſs the ſucceſſion of an Alcimus could deſtroy the Aaronic Prieſthood. Wicked men have ſometimes been intruded by unjuſt actions and tyrants, eſpecially the counts of neighbouring territories: but the providence of God has interpoſed on ſuch occaſions in protecting his church. And we may confidently affirm, that though ſome few intruders have ſometimes cauſed vacations, and ſcandals, there is no Epiſcopal See in the world which can ſhew ſo illuſtrious a catalogue of paſtors, in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion from the Apoſtles, as the Apoſtolic chair of Rome, whether we conſider their learning, eminent ſanctity, great actions, or other qualifications. Mr. Bower himſelf could not refuſe this teſtimony to the Popes of his time.

On the occaſion of a ſpurious piece under the name of Pelagius II, he writes T. 2 p. 461. 'It is to me a matter of great ſurprize, that the men of ſenſe and learning among the Roman Catholics, who have often been the firſt to detect the forgery of ſuch pieces, ſhould continue to maintain an authority chiefly owing to theſe glaring forgeries.' He confeſſes and proves with the learned men of all communions, that the falſe decretals were not forged by any contrivance of the See of Rome; but by ſome obſcure German in the ninth century. (T. 1. p. 14.) Indeed, the moſt barefaced impudence cannot charge the Catholic Church with patronizing forgeries. Its biſhops and councils have always been moſt ſevere in detecting and puniſhing them. See the decrees of the fourth council of Lateran, and of that of Trent againſt counterfeit miracles and reliques, &c. But Mr. Bower pretends that the Popes made uſe of thoſe forgeries to eſtabliſh their ſupremacy. Here he forgets that he himſelf had cenſured Innocent I. and many others long before for claiming the ſupremacy, and that the forgeries were ſeveral ages poſterior even to

Phocas,

Phocas. He everlooks the cleareſt monuments of this ſupremacy in the antient fathers and earlieſt ages. The forgeries mentioned are much too late to ſerve his ſlander; and it is very inconſiſtent to call them the ſtays of an authority which was notoriouſly of a much older date. The learned Catholics have ſpared neither pains nor diligence to diſcover and explode whatever writings or hiſtories appear not to be ſufficiently warranted authentic, as their works ſhew, and Mr. Bower confeſſes: who has himſelf no hints of this kind of literature which he has not taken from them. Grotius, that learned Proteſtant critic, tells us (l. de Antichr. T. 3. Op. Theol.) that the Popes have always condemned forgeries, and that their decrees and canons publicly read in the body of the canon-law ſuffice alone to demonſtrate this: moreover, that whoever will detect or oppoſe any forgery, will meet with favour from a good Pope and from all Catholic prelates and divines. If Mr. Bower can furniſh any new lights from good manuſcripts or other ſources, they will be of all others moſt thankful for them. But this author has much diſappointed the curious among his ſubſcribers in that reſpect. They find nothing new in him but arts, which all men of learning and probity abhor: and nothing can more hurt a religion than the recourſe to them for its ſupport. When ſlanders are removed, truth ſhines the brighter. I confeſs myſelf a little weary, and beg a truce: after which I ſhall endeavour to give you farther ſatisfaction, if you again command,

Your obedient humble ſervant.

P. S. Your queries are juſt come to my hands. To your firſt difficulty, whether Benedict XIII. was inclined to declare null and void all profeſſions of virgins made under the age of 25 years, as is advanced by Mr. Bower, p. 65, I can only anſwer that it ſeems an evident miſtake: for it is notoriouſly inconſiſtent with the known maxims of that pope. On one ſide, a total ignorance of vice is the moſt happy and ſecure barrier of innocence, and an early piety has infinite advantages in the ſervice of God. But on the other, it behoves all who think themſelves called to a religious ſtate, to examine well their ſtrength and vocation, to conſult God, to take good advice, to make no engagements raſhly, and to chuſe a monaſtery in which the ſpirit of that order flouriſheth with the moſt exact diſcipline. Without this a religious houſe would be no longer an harbour and ſanctuary of virtue, but a dangerous ſhelf of ſands and rocks, and a place of ſhipwrecks by the occaſions of tepidity

and

and ſloth, and by a torrent of example, cuſtoms and maxims contrary to the moſt rigorous obligations. Superiours in ſuch places cannot be too cautious in trying thoroughly the novices whom they admit: nor ought multitudes to be the object of their ambition. Perfection is not the happineſs of every one. St. Toribio obſerved in his council at Lima in 1583, ch. 28, that it is much more advantageous to the church and to ſouls that few and only the choiceſt perſons ſhould be ordained to the prieſthood, than a multitude with many unſkilful and unfit. Ambition, avarice, or gluttony become far more deteſtable crimes, if they happen to be found in perſons who profeſs an extraordinary ſanctity. A ſmall ſtain in a very rich ſuit is a great blemiſh. Yet it ought not to be a reproach to a ſtate if ſome have lived a ſcandal to the habit which they wore, and ſtrangers to the ſpirit of their Rule. Chriſt was pleaſed to ſuffer a Judas among his apoſtles, to ſhew us that no numerous community of men is to be expected on earth in which ſome chaff will not be mixt with the good corn: ſome tares will grow amidſt the wheat. The bad live either that they may be converted, or that the good may receive in them an exerciſe of their virtue. We cannot hope to find in this world a ſanctuary removed from all ſnares. Virtue would no longer have any trials, nor conſequently any victories or crowns. Some have culled out of Palladius and Rufin two or three examples of ſtrolling perſons who diſguiſed a worldly ſpirit under the maſk of a monaſtic habit, but omit that thoſe hiſtories are filled with inſtances of the greateſt miracles of divine grace with which that ſtate then adorned the church. It would be eaſy to ſhew the like through every ſucceeding age: nor is this preſent deſtitute of innumerable illuſtrious lights of that order of men, as Sir Thomas Moor anſwered Tindal in the fifteenth century. The Athanaſius's, the Baſils, the Chryſoſtoms, the Theodorets admired thoſe holy men and their inſtitute. Innumerable ſouls have been formed in perfect virtue by the exerciſe of a monaſtic life, and have been rendered amiable patterns of humility, meekneſs, patience, charity, an eminent ſpirit of prayer, and all other virtues, which they poſſeſſed not as barely moral good men do, but in a heroic degree, by a purity and ardor in their affections not conceived by the lukewarm. Who is not inflamed by the ſpirit of piety which reigns in the works of St. John Climacus, Thomas a Kempis, St. Tereſa, &c? What heavenly light and prudence ſhine in them? What divine unction and ardor

dor do the overflowing hearts of theſe ſaints breathe even in the dead letter? We muſt add with Conringius, a learned German proteſtant, (Diſſ. 3. de ant. Acad.) that the Engliſh, German, and other northern nations, received the faith by monks: that books were copied before the art of printing, and learning was propagated by them; and monaſteries were long the only univerſities beſides the palaces or ſeminaries of biſhops. The paſtors of the church are ever ready by wholeſome canons to put all poſſible bars againſt any dangers of abuſes in this ſtate. Certain private perſons might perchance ſpeak of ſome farther reſtrictions effectually to prevent the danger of parents overawing children, by an impious tyranny, into ſuch a ſtate, which muſt be the free deliberate choice of every one, with advice and deference. But the church has long ago declared ſuch profeſſions reverſible. In marriage children cannot lawfully choſe a party without the advice of their parents. Duty, the law of nature, the poſitive Divine law, (which places obedience to parents at the head of the ſecond table in the decalogue) the infinite danger of inexperience and of the blindneſs of paſſions, and the juſt and wiſe laws of the ſtate, preſs this obligation on young perſons, who are bound not to entertain the leaſt overture to ſuch an engagement till they have ſatisfied this precept: for engagements of this nature, when they have been once liſtened to, captivate, and are not eaſily to be broken. Yet on the other ſide, a parent overſtrains his prerogative when he chuſes diſagreeable matches for his children, prefers money or other conveniences to their happineſs, oppoſes their choice when virtuous, prudent, and ſuitable, or doth not leave them that liberty which reaſon requires in a point in which every one hath an eſſential right to his own perſonal option when evidently reaſonable, and accompanied with deference and obedience. Forced marriages, contrary to the inclinations of the parties, are often the bane of every virtue, duty, and comfort of the holy matrimonial ſtate, and are compared by Charron to the coupling of a living body with a dead carcaſe to drag for life. Yet it would perhaps be difficult for a legiſlator to remedy this abuſe, without opening a gap to greater evils, from the giddineſs of raſh youth and their headſtrong paſſions. But if a perſon ſhould have raſhly ſtaked himſelf down for life in an unhappy marriage, he cannot fall back, and is bound to make it his vocation, to ſatisfy all its duties, and chearfully to work out his ſalvation in it.

You aſk how Pope Sylveſter preſided in the council of Nice? Socrates [l. 1. c. 5.] Sozomen [l. 1. c. 16.] and Theodoret [l. 1. c. 7.] ſay that he was not able to come to it in perſon on account of his great age; but that he ſent his legates. Gelaſius of Cyzicus (l. 2. hiſt. Conc. Nicæn. c. 5. T. 2. Conc.) writes: 'Oſius held the place of the Biſhop of Rome, together with the Roman prieſts Vito and Vincentius.' Theſe three are named firſt in the ſubſcriptions in the editions of that council (Conc. T. 2. p. 50.) and in Socrates who expreſsly places them before Alexander patriarch of Alexandria, and Euſtathius patriarch of Antioch, &c. The biſhops of the oriental churches aſſembled at Conſtantinople, in order for the fifth general council in 552, (Conc. T. 5. p. 337, 338.) teſtify that the popes of Rome preſided by their legates in the council of Nice, and the three following general councils. In the fourth general council of Chalcedon in 451 Dioſcorus, patriarch of Alexandria, was accuſed and condemned, among other crimes, becauſe he had pretended in the Latrocinale of Epheſus to celebrate a general council without the authority of the apoſtolic ſee. "Synodum auſus eſt facere ſine autoritate ſedis apoſtolicæ, quod nunquam licuit, nunquam factum eſt." (Conc. T. 4. p. 95.) If pope Sylveſter had not ſent legates with a commiſſion to preſide in his name, his approbation and confirmation of the council afterwards might have ſupplied that circumſtance. I have no where ſummed up the proofs of the ſupremacy of the ſee of Rome, becauſe it was my taſk only to conſider the Hiſtory before me. Mr. Bower, like other proteſtants in their controverſial books and ſermons, inſtead of attacking the articles of our faith, uſually diſputes againſt phantoms of his own creation, or private opinions which he may explode, yet be a good catholic; nay, often againſt abſurdities and errors which all catholics condemn. His chief art conſiſts in ſophiſtically blending and interweaving theſe ſuperfluous or heterodox opinions with the pure articles of our creed, to impoſe upon the vulgar. This is to ſlander a faith which he is afraid to encounter. Such a champion reſembles a general, who turning his army from an enemy whom he durſt not meet, ſhould command his ſoldiers Quixote-like to make an eaſy havock on a field of briars, or with Caligula, to fill their helmets with cockle-ſhells, calling theſe the ſpoils of the ocean, and trophies of valour. Such a controvertiſt ought to ſtand a trial, not only for cowardice and deſerting his colours, but for malice prepenſe, of which

which only ignorance can acquit him: nor can even this plea be allowed him, if we admit the maxim of Canon law: 'Ignorance never excuſes a man, in things which he is bound to know.' It is an unparalleled baſeneſs and crime to endeavour to deſtroy truth by the blackeſt calumnies, becauſe it is impregnable. It is a well-known Machiavelian maxim: Throw dirt enough, and ſomething will ſtick. "Fortiter detrahe, aliquid ſemper adhærebit." But certainly nothing can more decry religion, or its miniſters, than if they be found to employ this helliſh art in the chair of truth.

The miſrepreſentations of the actions and writings of the fathers is a ſlander of a pernicious conſequence. Panegyriſts are allowed to make uſe of the art of painters, who to conceal a want of an eye or other blemiſh draw the face in profile, that the deformity may not appear, or they diſguiſe it under the drapery or by ſhades. But the fidelity of an hiſtorian obliges him not to conceal the manifeſt faults of public perſons, which it may concern poſterity for various purpoſes to be acquainted with: yet where faults were not notorious, and the publication of them is not neceſſary to detect a pernicious impoſture, it would be an injuſtice and detraction to divulge them: for even the dead live in their reputation, and their memory and aſhes are ſacred. Slander and detraction againſt the illuſtrious deceaſed, contract a peculiar enormity, eſpecially when they tend to diſgrace the great models and pillars of religion and virtue. Some perſons are ſo full of gall that they can diſcover nothing but hypocriſy, malice, ambition, pride, avarice or vice in the actions and virtues of others: like certain miſanthropes, who through their own perverſity, and the falſe glaſs of their gloomy ideas, can ſee no excellencies in human nature, which they degrade below that of horſes and aſſes; can diſcern no happineſs in any enjoyments of which man is capable; and can find nothing on the earth which we inhabit, but what ſeems to them the dregs and ſcum of the univerſe, drained from the higher orbs on this little outcaſt dirty planet. Such writers will find in their own hearts the ſource of this depravity in their judgment. We ſay the ſame much more of thoſe Ariſtippus's who make it a point of merit to ſlander and defame the moſt illuſtrious heirs of the ſpirit and virtues of the apoſtles. The holy fathers were men, and peccable. Though moſt perfectly ſkilled in the pure maxims of the goſpel, they enjoyed no privilege of infallibility. In points in which they are

generally unanimous, their teſtimony is the voice of that divine tradition, by which the catholic church maintains unvaried the ſacred depoſit of faith to the end of the world, which it received from the apoſtles. If an eccleſiaſtical writer fell into any exotic opinion, no account is to be made thereof. St. Juſtin, St. Irenæus, and Sulpitius Severus, were miſtaken by a falſe interpretation of the Revelations of St. John given by Papias, and adopted the ſyſtem of a millenarian reign of Chriſt with his ſaints on earth at the end of the world; not in carnal delights, as Cerinthus advanced, but in ſpiritual pleaſures and holy functions. But the paſtors of the church examined the tradition delivered down from the apoſtles, preſerved by the chief ſees, and by the body of the faithful, and by its light exploded the error. In like manner St. Irenæus [l. 3. c. 3.] Vincent of Lerins [Common.] St. Auſtin, &c. teſtify that the church, by ſearching the true meaning of the ſcriptures by the channel of tradition, cut off all novelties in faith as ſoon as any were broached. It is therefore a grievous ſlander of our adverſaries, that we place the fathers on the bench of judges with the holy ſcriptures: an impiety at the very thought of which every catholic is ſhocked. We regard the fathers only as vouchers and witneſſes to the tradition of the church in the ages wherein they lived; by their writings we prove the antiquity of our holy faith, and its conſtant tradition. Who can read their unanimous doctrine, and practice in the article of prayer for the dead? and not cry out with Mr. Thorndike [Juſt Weights and Meaſures, ch. 16. p. 16.] 'The practice of the church in interceding for the Dead is ſo general, and ſo antient, that it cannot be thought to have come in upon impoſture, but that the ſame aſperſion will ſeem to take hold of the common chriſtianity.' We reaſon in the ſame manner on other points. A late author of the Defence of Dr. Conyers Middleton, concerning the miraculous powers, has employed a very long preface to prove that proteſtants muſt either explode the fathers, or, if they will make them their guides, turn papiſts again. He ſhews that Dr. Deacon and other proteſtants, merely by reading their writings, reſtored the principal articles for which the firſt proteſtants made the breach. He might have added, Dr. Grabe and all others who have ſincerely taken that method. This ſeems the true reaſon why many have ſet themſelves to decry the greateſt lights and primitive guides of the church, after the apoſtles:

apoſtles: men whoſe lives ſurpaſſed whatever heathen philoſophy had even feigned moſt perfect in virtue, whoſe natural and acquired talents had not their equals, and whoſe heroic ſanctity, eminent ſpirit of prayer, and purity of heart, freed from the bias and blinds of violent paſſions, rendered them veſſels of grace, and qualified them for heavenly lights. Some have carried their cenſures of theſe great men ſo far, as notoriouſly to betray the cauſe of chriſtianity into the hands of the deiſts: one of them, after having pretended to prove the Cyprians, the Auſtins, and the whole bench of the fathers to have been either knaves or fools, and ſome both who coined known forgeries of revelations and miracles to deceive the people into new opinions, at length in his poſthumous works did not ſpare the character of St. Peter and St. Paul themſelves. The natural conſequences of this ſyſtem ſeem to be, that truth muſt either be found in the Catholic church or we muſt utterly baniſh chriſtianity out of doors with the antiquated Ariſtotelian ſyſtem of the formation of the comets from exhalations, to uſe the compariſon of Mr. Bayle. Some perhaps thought by this means to cover the diſgraces of the origin of their own church: of which his preſent Pruſſian majeſty in his elegant memoirs of the houſe of Brandenbourgh, ſhews the ſprings to have been the very baſeſt paſſions of the human mind. He cloſes his account with this corollary.—If we would reduce the cauſes of the progreſs of the reformation into ſimple principles, it was in Germany the work of covetouſneſs, in England that of luſt, and in France that of novelty or perhaps of a ſong. Mr. Warburton quotes this paſſage in his Julian (Introd. p. 39.) to ſhow that oblique paſſions, not the love of truth, ſet the machine a going; but ſays, thoſe who have profited of this bleſſing, ought not to be upbraided with the baſeneſs of the inſtruments who procured it. But certainly, chriſtianity in its birth would never have made any progreſs in the world, or have appeared to be the work of the Holy Ghoſt, if the inſtruments and means had borne the viſible marks of ſatan. Thoſe who ſeek unjuſtly to blaſt the credit and integrity of the firſt fathers, indiſcreetly undermine chriſtianity itſelf. We chiefly conſider them as doctors in religion, and their pens might in any dreſs conſerve the true maxims of that goſpel, of which the apoſtles left them the depoſitaries and guardians under Chriſt, the inviſible head and protector of his church to the end of the world. But

many of them poſſeſſed the greateſt advantages and talents from the world, and profane literature, as it ſtood in their days.

It is a very unfair way of dealing to give the character of any man or work by ſumming up only the failings or miſtakes with which they are charged. At this rate what a figure would the Paradiſe Loſt of Milton, make? or the immortal Iliad of Homer, the higheſt effort of human genius, which yet is loaded with criticiſms, and often very juſtly. Would not Dr. Middleton juſtly be angry with the man who ſhould pretend to draw the character of his hero Cicero, by producing only his letter to Lucceius and other monuments of his unparalleled vanity and pride, his apologies of unnatural luſt, and inſtances in which he proſtituted his authority and eloquence notoriouſly againſt juſtice, and ſometimes in favour of clients on both ſides in the ſame cauſe. What would theſe admirers of the heathen worthies ſay to a man who ſhould deſcribe Horace by nothing elſe but cowardice, in baſely throwing away his buckler and ſhewing a good pair of heels, when he ought to have defended the liberty of his country; or by the ſhameleſs obſcenities of his life and writings, the eternal diſgrace of human nature joined with ſo great elegance and talents? or to him who ſhould paint a portraiture of the great patriot and prince of orators Demoſthenes in the attitude in which, in his flight after his bad conduct in the quality of a general in the field, finding his long robe held by briars, and imagining himſelf in the hands of enemies, in his diſtracted fear, he cried out in a piteous voice to the harmleſs buſh, 'Quarter, ſpare my life!' ζωγρει. And what modern writer ſhall we find who has not his dark ſide?

The defects found in the fathers are ſuch as no way depreciate their true merit. If a St. Juſtin ſhews by certain miſtakes in Hebrew words, that he did not underſtand that language; or if he relates upon truſt the ſtories of the Helleniſt Jews, concerning the diſtinct cells of the 70 interpreters of their bible: if Sulpitius Severus is ſometimes miſtaken in chronology, in an age when tables and the like helps were not at hand: if St. Chryſoſtom commits an anachroniſm in his diſcourſe on St. Babylas, whilſt like other orators in declamations, he is more ſolicitous about facts than dates; which though neceſſary to aſcertain hiſtory, and to render it methodical, were not much regarded by the firſt-rate writers of thoſe ages: it is humbly conceived

ceived that they cannot ſuffer on theſe accounts, in the opinion of equitable judges.

The Greek and Roman claſſics are the greateſt fund, and the juſt ſtandard of good ſenſe, and of a proper way of thinking, except where prejudices and errors gave their judgment a falſe bias: for the polite arts, and a true taſte arrived at their zenith in the flouriſhing ages of thoſe two empires. Since the revival of the ſame arts, it has been the higheſt ambition of our greateſt geniuſes only to rival the moſt perfect models of antiquity: I might ſay in many things only to follow them at a diſtance. Michael Angelo is a ſcool-boy, if compared with many great artiſts of antiquity in ſculpture; and the Venus of Medicis, the ſtatues of the Belvedere, &c. ſtill remain an object of aſtoniſhment, not of rivalſhip, notwithſtanding our improvements in anatomy and ſo many other ſciences which depend on obſervations and experience. If our ncomparable Pope ſeems almoſt to vie with his original Homer, we muſt remember that the original ſhews infinitely more of genius by the plot and invention. Far from detracting from the reputation of the heathen claſſics, whom Dr. Middleton and others who are converſant in them, ſo much admire; I wiſh I were able to add any thing which might excite you to a cloſer ſtudy, and to a greater emulation of their excellencies and beauties. But at the ſame time I beg leave to affirm that many of the fathers equal the greateſt among them, even in elegance and propriety of thought and expreſſion. Sulpitius Severus, the chriſtian Salluſt, is preferred by judicious critics to the Roman; and St. Gregory Nazianzen, and St. Baſil, to Demoſthenes. The compariſon can only be made by reading their works: detached extracts can be of ſmall ſervice towards forming ſuch a judgment: on which account Mr. Blackwall has not convinced the world that the Greek language of the New Teſtament is equal in elegance and purity with that of the Attic writers. But ſeveral of the Greek fathers challenge that excellency. Natural philoſophy and many of the uſeful and polite arts have received great improvements ſince their time, by the dint of experience, and caſual diſcoveries. Among theſe aſtronomy and the hiſtory of nature have attained the greateſt increaſe, and may be ſtyled new ſciences ſince our voyages round the globe, our repeated exact obſervations, and our new inſtruments, eſpecially thoſe which give us new eyes to diſcover worlds before inviſible to us in the remote heavens, and in the minute

objects

objects under our ſenſes. In theſe improved arts we are not to compare the fathers with our times, but with their own: and if we are inclined to laugh at the conceits of Coſmas Indicopleuſtes in his ſyſtem of the world, we ſhall find thoſe of Ptolemy, Seneca, and other heathens as ſtrange, and as wide from the truth. If a Voltaire confounds the diſtance of the fixed ſtars with that of the ſun from the earth, and makes the progreſs of light to be performed from the former in ſeven minutes, which requires ſeveral months, he betrays an ignorance of the very philoſophy which he undertakes to expound. But if Coſmas ſuppoſed the earth flat, not round, and the heavens ſolid, he ſpoke according to the philoſophy of his days. The few obſervations of St. Baſil on anatomy and the hiſtory of animals, though infinitely imperfect if compared with thoſe of moderns, ſeem more exact than thoſe of Ariſtotle, who was furniſhed with immenſe ſums by Alexander to render them complete. After all, will not poſterity pity our pride, and by our own rule call us little and ignorant, ſhould they ever fix with clear demonſtration the periods of the comets, and diſcover their uſes, and the univerſal ſpirit which the great Newton ſuſpects them to convey; or ſhould they learn the circulation of the ſpirits, or fluid of the nerves, as perfectly as that of the blood; find out the nature and wonderful purpoſes of the particular atmoſphere of each body, and of electricity, that great ſpring of nature, and doubtleſs general cauſe of numberleſs hidden effects in all bodies, at leaſt in our region of the univerſe; or if chance ſhould perfect reflecting teleſcopes, ſo far as to ſhew us minute bodies on the ſurface of the moon; or if it ſhould teach men to analyſe innumerable cauſes unknown to us: will not all ſucceeding ages be aſtoniſhed at the extravagance of the great maſters of ſects among us, Deſcartes, M———, B———, in their wild knotty ſyſtems of building the world, which by their own inconſiſtent laws would have crumbled into atoms in its very foundation? May we not ſay with Mat. Prior,

"From this laſt toil again what knowledge flows?
Juſt as much perhaps as ſhows,
That all his predeceſſor's rules
Were empty cant, all jargon of the ſchools;
That he on t'other's ruin rears his throne,
And ſhows his friend's miſtake, and thence confirms his own."

Æneas

Æneas Sylvius was diverted, in the ſchools of metaphyſical ſubtilties, with meeting a famous profeſſor at Vienna, who had ſpent 22 years in expounding the firſt chapter of Iſaiah, and had not yet finiſhed it. (Ep. 165.) Can ſome now-a-days give a more rational account of the employ of their time and talents, idly buſy in Liliputian nothings, and vainly puffed up in breaking their teeth to crack ſtones? Eraſmus complains of our inſolence towards the father, in an epiſtle to archbiſhop Warham, in his edition of the works of St. Jerome. 'You will ſee,' ſays he 'pettyfoggers ſtart up who ſcarce know ten Latin words and two of Greek, with ſix paradoxes, who preſume to cry down authors conſecrated by the admiration of ſo many ages, I know not whether with greater ingratitude, impiety, or folly and ignorance.' The fathers often paſſed over philoſophical and profane diſquiſitions, not out of ignorance, but as foreign to their purpoſe, being ſolicitous to teach what might promote holineſs of life, and to ſhun what might occupy their precious moments without contributing to that end; which we may obſerve alſo in the ſacred penmen, as St. Auſtin takes notice (l. 2. de Gen. ad lit. c. 1.) The learned Mr. Warburton writes in his Julian, (Introd. p. 11.) 'To know the true value of the fathers, we ſhould place them by their contemporaries, the pagan writers of greateſt fame. It is a fact which none acquainted with antiquity will deny, how great a ſecret ſoever modern divines may make of it, that as polite ſcholars (and it is this which we muſt affect to value) whether in eloquence, ethics, antiquity, or philoſophy, the chriſtian writers have indiſputably the firſt place. Nay, there are ſome of them who have ſucceſsfully rivalled the very beſt authors of antiquity. St. Chryſoſtom has more good ſenſe than Plato, and you may find in Lactantius almoſt as many good words as in Tully.' It is objected that ſome of the fathers were fond of allegorical reaſonings: but the cuſtom of their age and country alleviates this charge: they ſpoke to men whoſe ears had contracted a depraved itch to be ſometimes tickled to their fancy: nor were theſe allegories employed unleſs in clear points, and for illuſtration like ſimiles, not properly as proofs. The tyrant cuſtom authorizes, and enſlaves every nation to faſhions which would excerciſe the wit and humorous cenſure of a Le Blanc or ſome other judicious foreigner. Other excellencies in our great writers make ample amends for trifling defects. But I fear my poſtſcript

ſcript will ſwell into a mail, if I indulge my vein on this ſubject.

For the Apology of my preſumption in handling theſe points without more leiſure, I refer you to a cenſure of Cato. When Aulus Albinus, a Roman conſul, in the days of Cæſar and Cicero, the moſt flouriſhing epoch of the Latin language, had wrote a book in Greek, with an apology for his language and ſtyle, becauſe he was an Italian: the farce moved Cato to laughter, that in his preface he ſhould beg pardon for a fault, which it was then in his power to avoid. "Maluiſti culpam deprecari quàm culpâ carere," as Gellius gives his words. However, as Plutarch mentions, the cenſor added, that the plea ought to be allowed juſt, if the author could make it appear that he had been compelled to write by a decree of the Amphictyones. Your requeſts have with me the force of a no leſs ſacred law, and any other fault here will appear more pardonable than diſobedience.

FINIS.